the weekly
standard

JUNE 21, 1999 • $3.50

WOMEN AND SCIENCE AT YALE
DAVID GELERNTER

The Historians' Great War

David Frum on new World War I books by John Keegan and Niall Ferguson

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VOLUME 4, NUMBER 38 • JUNE 21, 1999

2 SCRAPBOOK

4 CASUAL
Christopher Caldwell tastes the nineties in a cup of coffee.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

9 EDITORIAL
Shooting the Messenger

11 WOMEN AND SCIENCE AT YALE
Affirmative action takes a new turn. *by* **David Gelernter**

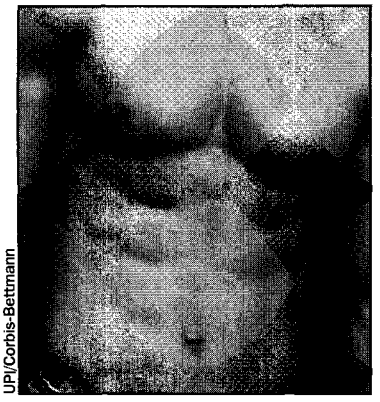
13 HORMEL'S CHILLY RECEPTION
A gay ambassador has GOPers in a tizzy. *by* **Sam Dealey**

15 GOD IS MY CAMPAIGN MANAGER
The candidates talk about their faith. *by* **Tucker Carlson**

17 WIZARDS OF OZONE
The EPA overplays its hand. *by* **Randall Lutter & Christopher DeMuth**

19 OUR STRATEGIC TRADING PARTNER?
Is China trade good for us? *by* **William R. Hawkins**

40 PARODY
Strongmen cash in on the IPO craze.



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22 NOTES ON THE HAIRLESS MAN
Today's American male is distinctly boyish. *by* **David Skinner**

26 "KILL THE BILL, NOT THE ILL"
A report from the front lines of the assisted-suicide fight in California. *by* **Wesley J. Smith**

Cover by UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

Books & Arts

31 THE HISTORIANS' WAR John Keegan and Niall Ferguson analyze the lessons of 1914. *by* **David Frum**

35 WRITER'S BLOCK Barry Unsworth's *Sugar and Rum* examines the unexamined life. *by* **Norah Vincent**

37 TOP HAT On the centenary of Fred Astaire, the aristocratic democrat. *by* **S. T. Karnick**

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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"The Fact Is, I've Always Been a Yankees Fan"

So Hillary, it turns out, is Clintonian, too, and not just by marriage. In her first major event as candidate for the Senate in New York, the first lady had the Yankees over to the White House last week to celebrate their 1998 World Series victory, eight months after the fact. Well, better late than never. But the truly Clintonian aspect of the event was the whopper she told about her lifelong attachment to the Yankees.

The essence of a Clintonian whopper is a) that you have no compunction about telling it, even when the stakes are low and the political benefit is trivial; and b) that once you decide to tell it, you make it as convoluted and preposterous as possible, like a squid spreading ink in its wake. Thus Hillary to the *Today* show's Katie Couric: "The fact is [a nice rhetorical touch, meaning that what follows isn't factual], I've always been a Yankees fan."

Now it happens that millions of words have been written on the subject of Hillary Rodham Clinton, and to the best of The Scrapbook's knowledge, there has never been a hint of a longtime allegiance to the Yankees. We do know that she's a fan of her hometown Chicago Cubs (see inset photo above). Explaining that apparent contradiction is what a law degree is for: "I am [also] a Cubs fan. But I needed an American League team, because when you're from Chicago, you cannot root for both the Cubs and the Sox. I mean, there's a dividing line that you can't cross there. So as a young girl, I became very interested and enamored of the Yankees." Perhaps it depends on what the meaning of "enamored" is.

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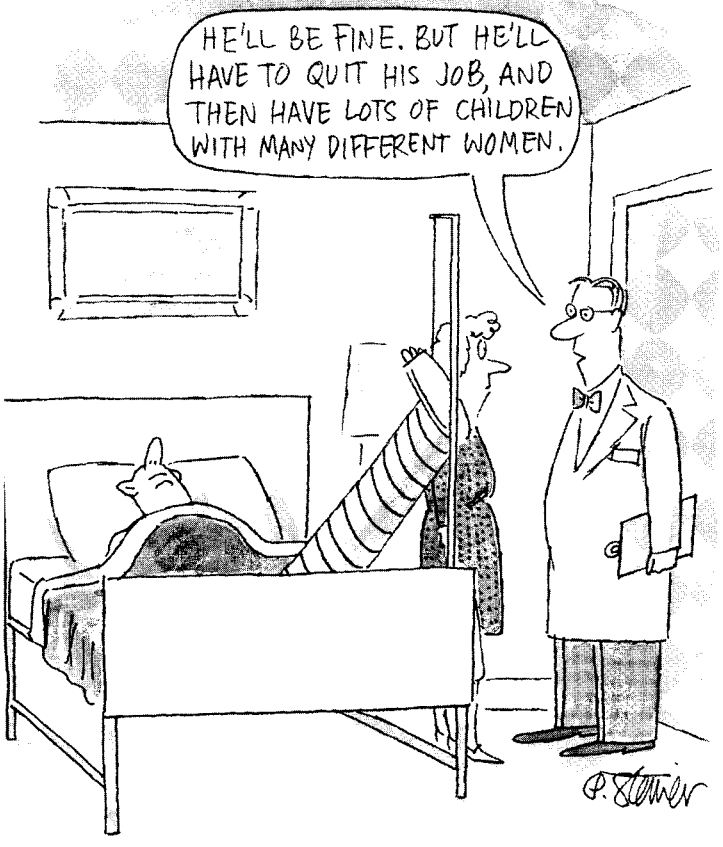
Scrapbook



IF CHARISMATIC WERE A MAN

That Old Right-Wing Declaration

The *New York Times* reported last week that one of its favorite Republicans, the famously moderate New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman, "May Have to Move to Right," as the headline forebodingly put it. One of the "conservative proposals" she may end up signing to lure voters for her reelection would add some required reading to the public school curriculum. Gee, and what could that be? The Bible? William F. Buckley Jr.'s new novel? No, it's the Declaration of Independence, which apparently in liberal New Jersey precincts now passes for a founding document of the vast right-wing conspiracy.

As the *Times* reporter explained the "controversial" proposal: "The excerpt in question includes the phrase 'that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' Some Democratic critics contend that the measure is really a subtle attempt to further the anti-abortion argument: They note that among the unalienable rights is 'life,' and opponents of abortion describe themselves as 'pro-life.'"

Instant Revisionism

"We have defended the only multiethnic society left over as a remnant of former Yugoslavia. This is another great achievement of our defense." —Slobodan Milosevic, June 10, 1999. This was obviously a war between multicultural Serbs and a NATO intent on ethnic purity, as high school textbooks (ca 2025) will doubtless explain.

The Clinton Utopia

"The homeless got a lot of air time in the 80's, but that's over," complained Bob Herbert in his *New York Times* column last week. "The mask of the triumphant suburbanite is the face of the 90's, and poverty is no longer discussed in polite company." This couldn't have anything to do with which party controls the White House now, could it, Bob?

Riordan's Triumph

Overshadowed by the accounts of Rudy Giuliani's successes in New York have been the achievements of the other big-city Republican mayor, Richard Riordan of Los Angeles. Having already reduced crime and overseen an economic rebirth in the city, Riordan scored his biggest victory yet last week—60 percent of voters approved his plan for a new city charter over the fierce opposition of the corrupt city council and organized labor. It replaces the 1925 charter, a phone-book-size product of the Progressive era that created a weak mayor's office beholden to the city council's whims.

Riordan's triumph did not end there. He also ended the teachers' unions' stranglehold on the school board in a city where only 53 percent of high school freshman end up graduating. Genethia Hayes, his handpicked candidate for the board, won a runoff election last week despite opposition from the unions and local demagogues like Rep. Maxine Waters. Her victory gives Riordan's reform contingent a working majority on the seven-member board—a welcome sign to the beleaguered parents of the 700,000 students who attend Los Angeles public schools.

How did Riordan do it? By having the guts to take on the city's bureaucracy and labor unions. He also had the courage to defy conventional wisdom, which said that passage of the new charter would depend on high turnout in the mostly white San Fernando Valley. In fact, predominately Latino districts also approved the charter by unexpectedly wide margins. As Riordan's success reminds us, a little spine goes a long way.

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Casual

JAVA JIVE

When my friend Ivan came to visit from Moscow last week, we sat on the back porch, drinking coffee in the 85-degree heat until 1:30 in the morning. Much of our conversation concerned coffee. Ivan has the theory that Russia's opening to the West since Gorbachev has given it a real intoxicant problem—or to be euphemistic about it, a "stimulant" problem.

In the old days, there was a healthy balance between the constriction of the Russian economy and the implacability of the Russian appetite. If there was vodka around, a Russian would drink it. Same with tea. If there were cigarettes around, a Russian would smoke them. But those were about the only intoxicants anybody had ever heard of—and none of them, not even the tea, could be procured in volume. The glass-half-full way of looking at it is that scarcity was the ally of temperance. The glass-half-empty view is that scarcity left Russians with an absence of self-control. "No one ever had to limit his consumption of anything," Ivan said. "We had the economy to do that for us."

The results of the Soviet collapse for Russian continence have thus been grimmest for the classes with dollars at their disposal—among them my friend's journalistic colleagues. The mousy little lady literary journalist who used to save her kopecks for a twice-yearly "treat" of crummy Russian chocolates has discovered that she can afford a liter-sized McDonald's chocolate milkshake every day at lunchtime. *Khhhhhlerp! Mmm!* Now she has a 250-pound frame to heave up the stairs to the office every morning.

And that's a relatively innocuous yearning. One journalist of Ivan's acquaintance has married his typically Russian oral compulsion to the American insistence on bigger-better-stronger that he's absorbed from the television. So instead of relaxing after work with a few belts of vodka, he's taken to mixing his nightcap with *Dilaudid*—a pain-killer so strong that westerners usually make its acquaintance only in the painful throes of terminal cancer.

Ivan is one of the rare Muscovites who got the best of both worlds. He remains a firm believer in Russia's pre-*glasnost* intoxicant monoculture. And since he doesn't like vodka, he's settled on coffee. Ivan drinks coffee with a slurping, sweating, tie-spattering, saucer-sloshing, and (as my wife has remarked) carpet-staining abandon. To my eyes, this makes him a representative man. Most eras have a signature toxin—gin in Hogarth's London and negus in Boswell's, absinthe in Toulouse-Lautrec's Paris and Pernod in Hemingway's, the martini in Eisenhower's America, LSD in Abbie Hoffman's. And in the 1990s? A Starbucks extra-tall-half-decaf-mocha-skim-latte.

There was, in retrospect, something inevitable about the coffee craze. It tracks almost week-for-week with the decade's prosperity. I remember flying into Miami airport with my wife-to-be in 1992, unable to contain my excitement that there was an espresso stand in the airport. *Imagine that!* I said. *An American airport where you can get espresso!* A year later, as evidence that we were emerging from recession became incontrovertible, three Starbucks popped up in my Washington neighborhood. By 1995, my wife and I were drinking cappuccino at a roadside grocery store south of Flagstaff, Arizona.

The problem in this economy, unlike Russia's, is that an obscene number of people could quite easily afford to drink a magnum of champagne with every meal. An America that's rich enough not just to buy but to drink, snort, or smoke virtually anything has got to set sharp cultural limits on what it can consume. Hence the elevation of coffee to Top Beverage, along with a paranoia over the effects of even paltry little caffeine, which have reached the point where cafés don't pour coffee any more so much as *titrate* it. (I recently heard an order for a "three-quarters decaf, one-quarter caf.")

The Age of Espresso won't last forever, of course. Horn & Hardart "automat" restaurants that used to pepper Manhattan before the Second World War were long ago reduced to a single redoubt in Midtown—a museum piece, more than anything else—and it has become incomprehensible to us that anyone would ever have wanted to get his lunch by sticking a quarter into a machine. Starbucks may go the same route. Someday, America will be poor enough to unwind again.

And then, eyes brimming with nostalgia, we'll tell our grandchildren about how wonderful it was to walk into a coffee bar for an extra-tall cappuccino on a cold day or an extra-skim de-caf iced Americano on a hot one. And our grandchildren will just nod uncomprehendingly from across the table in the corner Dilaud-o-Mat.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

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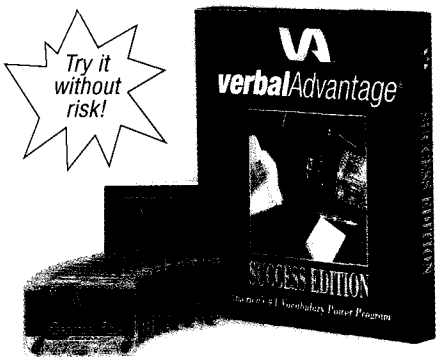

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Junk in the Nation's Attic

I read with interest David Brooks's article on the National Museum of American History, where I serve as a docent ("The National Museum of Multiculturalism," June 7). His point regarding multiculturalism is well taken. The museum has a rather grab bag approach to American history. However, he obviously missed one of the museum's best exhibits, the 1776 corner and the Revolutionary War era gun boat *Philadelphia*. Sunk at the Battle of Valcour Island in 1776, the boat was raised in 1935 and has been in the museum since it opened. From noon to 3:00 P.M., six days a week, there are docents who present a straightforward account of this small but significant battle. Afterwards, visitors (especially our younger ones) are invited to handle a variety of reproduction Revolutionary War-era artifacts ranging from linstock to bar shot.

TIM TILSON
FAIRFAX, VA

Having just returned from a long-anticipated family excursion to Washington, D.C., to visit the Mall museums and monuments, I was struck by the astuteness of David Brooks's piece on the National Museum of American History. Even the bookstore is now largely devoted to works documenting the brutal or even genocidal treatment of many Americans at the hands of a small group of non-poor, non-handicapped, non-politically radical males of northern European descent. The "Nation's Attic" is now the most politically correct experience one can endure outside of a mandatory course in cultural sensitivity.

JAMES ELLIOTT
DADE CITY, FL

Upon reading David Brooks's enlightening article on the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, I suffered a feeling of *déjà vu* all over again. The "America Last" and always wrong bug evidenced by the ignoble and notorious *Enola Gay* exhibit at the National Air and Space Museum has spread its germs to the American History Museum. As a museum junky since childhood and a retired museum head, I can speak with some feeling. While a tip of the hat to local minorities may be appropriate for regional and city museums, the national museum of history should celebrate and promote America's exceptionalism in a unifying way, rather than promoting divisiveness through diversity. After the *Enola Gay* travesty the Smithsonian should have learned a lesson. But the ideologues of the left are deeply entrenched: first in the foundations, then the universities, and now our museums. The institution is long overdue for a housecleaning.

BROOKE NIHART
MCLEAN, VA

Christian Engagement

While I am always grateful for any notice in THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Peter Wehner's review of Ed Dobson's and my new book, *Blinded By Might*, contains a number of erroneous assertions ("Saving Ourselves," May 24).

Beginning with the subheadline, "The Christian Urge to Flee from Politics," we repeatedly say we are suggesting nothing of the kind—only that the ordained should recuse themselves from partisan politics. The idolizing or demonizing of elected officials from pulpits diminishes the gospel and confuses the unchurched.

Second, Wehner laments our perceived lack of charity for those with whom we were once associated. In fact, we sent the manuscript to Jerry Falwell and invited any correction of factual errors. We agreed to every one of his suggested changes. In addition, both he and Pat Robertson are allowed to make their cases unchallenged by us in an interview section. We repeatedly offered the same opportunity to James Dobson, who declined.

Wehner suggests that public policy has reduced crime in New York City and abortions in Michigan. Policy has been a factor, but it is not the whole story. In Michigan, individual initiative through crisis pregnancy centers, abstinence education, and television and radio spots informing women about choices other than abortion have had a far greater impact. A woman can still obtain a legal abortion through all nine months of pregnancy in Michigan and everywhere else. An improving economy, as well as improved police presence, have combined to reduce New York City crime. Still, the prison population is at record levels.

Our point, mostly missed by Wehner, is that Christians, especially, are called to a higher kingdom and a King on whose shoulders the government will ultimately rest. They should not forfeit their citizenship rights in this temporal kingdom, but they should be under no illusion that politics or politicians are going to reach the heart of man. That is a power God reserves for Himself. And we who believe His word also know that our problems aren't caused by failures of organizations or politics; they come from a failure to properly diagnose the human condition (sin) and prescribe the correct solution, which is not reform, but redemption.

CAL THOMAS
ALEXANDRIA, VA

Jefferson Davis, GOP

As Alvin Felzenberg notes in his review of Henry Mayer's book on William Lloyd Garrison ("Race and Republicans," June 7), Jefferson Davis was indeed a "slaveholder, Democrat, and president of a Confederacy born in rebellion." Certainly by 1990s standards he should be considered a racist,

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as should presidents Washington and Lincoln. However, he was also a respected U.S. secretary of war, a brilliant U.S. senator, and the president of the second largest democracy in the world. This does not excuse Davis's views on race, but it provides context for his deeds—and for Sen. Lott's comments.

Like Athens in 400 B.C. and America in 1791, the South in 1860 was a slaveholding society which, paradoxically, revered freedom and justice. This is instructive: A society's view on one issue does not necessarily provide a useful context for appraising its total value. A Republican senator's past praise of a Confederate does not undermine the party's admirable record on human rights, both foreign and domestic.

JASON BOATRIGHT
AUSTIN, TX

BLAME GAME

Thanks for the update in THE SCRAPBOOK on Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and their ongoing campaign to exfoliate any trace of public religious expression from American society ("Americans United for Blame Shifting," June 7). Their pinning the blame for the Columbine High School murders on school religious displays represents a new low.

The article described Barry Lynn, the head of Americans United, as a Methodist pastor. Fortunately, we Methodists cannot accept the credit. I believe Rev. Lynn is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, which is—at least organizationally—a descendant of the New England Puritans' congregationalist churches.

How a spiritual heir of John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards ended up heading Americans United would justify an article unto itself.

MARK TOOLEY
WASHINGTON, DC

GORING THE CONSTITUTION

Christopher Caldwell's article on the "universal service charge" was most disturbing—especially the line which read, "For the last year and a half, the Federal Communications Commission has levied a phone tax . . ." ("The Gore Tax," May 31).

Is there no one in all of Washington even vaguely familiar with the first paragraph of Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution? To refresh memories, that little paragraph gives Congress the sole power to "lay and collect Taxes." Did it ever occur to anyone that it is illegal—unconstitutional—for petty bureaucrats to engage in extortion of this kind?

FRANK CROWSON
MT. AIRY, MD

FAILING TEACHERS

Jonathan Fox illuminates the mentality of the education establishment with a quote from an education professor who gets nervous "when an agricultural statistician works in education" ("Grading Teachers," May 17). However, the odds are that an agricultural statistician has much more experience in education than an education professor has in agriculture, statistics, or any number of other disciplines that the education specialist would not hesitate to instruct. Education is meaningless without content. Public education is in trouble largely because it provides neither an environment conducive to learning nor teachers who have something to teach. The crisis will not begin to subside until those essential elements are assigned the priority they deserve. The good professor probably doesn't get nearly as nervous about agricultural statisticians in his field as I do when educational "experts" begin to tinker with medical education.

W.M. GROGAN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
RICHMOND, VA

THE MENTAL TIP

A note of clarification regarding Matthew Rees's article on the efforts of Tipper Gore and senators Domenici and Wellstone to expand insurance parity for mental illnesses ("Tipper Can Do and Al Gore Too," May 31). Rees is correct that "parity" as envisioned by Tipper Gore and other liberals would include a broad range of "mental disorders" such as "Occupational Defiant Disorder" and other mental health problems that are far beyond the scope of biologically based brain disorders such as schizophrenia and manic-depression. Their agenda is clear—to medicalize social problems and impose an open-ended mandate on the private sector.

By contrast, Sen. Domenici's more responsible alternative, S-796, would constrain the scope of a federal parity requirement to a defined list of biologically based mental illnesses. This is the same approach that has been endorsed by numerous GOP governors, including George W. Bush, Frank Keating, Jim Gilmore, Steve Merrill, and Christine Todd Whitman.

ANDREW SPERLING
CHEVY CHASE, MD

OUT OF AFRICA

In Tod Lindberg's article on the potential George W. Bush versus Al Gore campaign, he notes that Gore will crib from Poppy Bush's campaign against Michael Dukakis and compares this to how Patton read Rommel's book before defeating him at El Alamein ("It's the Dukakis Campaign, Stupid," June 14). Unfortunately, Patton was on the other side of North Africa (Morocco/Algeria) while the British 8th Army defeated Rommel's much-depleted Afrika Korps at El Alamein (Egypt) in November 1942. Montgomery, not Patton, was the victor at that battle.

Lindberg should take care not to take his history from the movie *Patton*.

CHRIS GRIFFITH
MAYWOOD, NJ

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Can we handle the *Truth* about Marijuana?

MYTH: Marijuana is a gateway drug.

FACT: For every 104 people who have used marijuana, there is only one regular user of cocaine and less than one heroin addict. (1)

MYTH: Marijuana is addictive.

FACT: Less than one percent of people who consume marijuana do so on a daily or near daily basis. An even smaller minority develop dependence on marijuana. Withdrawal symptoms, if experienced at all, are mild. (2)

MYTH: Marijuana lowers motivation.

FACT: For twenty five years, researchers have searched for a marijuana-induced amotivational syndrome and have failed to find it. Of course, people who are constantly intoxicated, no matter what the drug, are not likely to be productive. (3)

MYTH: Higher concentrations of THC make marijuana more dangerous.

FACT: There is no possibility of fatal overdose from smoking marijuana, regardless of potency. High potency marijuana may be less harmful to the lungs because people can use less to achieve the desired effects. (4)

MYTH: Marijuana causes brain damage.

FACT: No medical test used to determine brain damage has indicated brain damage in humans who use marijuana — even after long-term use. (5)

So, why did we arrest 642,000 Americans last year for marijuana offenses?

SOURCES: **(1)** Department of HHS, *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*, 1997. **(2)** Department of HHS, *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*, 1997; Jones, r.t. et al, "Clinical Relevance of Cannabis Tolerance and Dependence," *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* 21:143-526 (1981). **(3)** Pope, H.G. et al, "Drug Use and Life Style Among College Undergraduates in 1989: A Comparison With 1969 and 1978,: *American Journal of Psychiatry* 147:998-001 (1990); Kandel, D. et al, "The Impact of Drug Use on Earnings: A Life-Span Perspective," *Social Forces* 74:243-270 (1995). **(4)** Department of Health and Human Services, "Marijuana and the Cannabinoids," pp., 131-44 in *Drug Abuse and Drug Abuse Research*, Third Triennial Report to Congress from the Secretary (1991). **(5)** Hannerz, J. and Hindmarsh, T. "Neurological and Neuroradiological Examination of Chronic Cannabis Smokers," Annals of Neurology 13:207-10 (1983); Stuve, F.A. and Straumania, J.J., "Electroencephalographic and Evoked Potential Methods in Human Marijuana Research Historical Review and Future Trends," *Drug Development Research* 20: 369-88 (1990).

A complete discussion of the effects of marijuana is available from *Marijuana Myths / Marijuana Facts: A Review of the Scientific Evidence* by Lynn Zimmer, Ph.D. and John Morgan, M.D. available from Bookworld Services 1-800-444-2524.

Visit Drug War Facts at: www.drugsense.org

Common Sense for Drug Policy Foundation Kevin B. Zeese, President, 703-354-5694, 703-354-5695 (fax), csdp@drugsense.org

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the weekly Standard

SHOOTING THE MESSENGER

What a piece of shameless zealotry this whole campaign finance "reform" business has become. The movement's favored piece of national legislation at the moment, the Shays-Meehan bill in the House of Representatives, is an almost unbelievable atrocity against the Constitution. It would, among other things, subject a giant swath of previously near-inviolable American political speech —issue advocacy by non-profit organizations—to draconian regulation. Voter guides distributed by such groups would be barred, on a year-round basis and on penalty of Federal Election Commission (FEC) enforcement action, from including any praise or blame of a particular congressman or senator. And for a 60-day period before each federal primary and general election, Shays-Meehan would absolutely prohibit non-profit organizations from broadcasting even strictly factual information about a candidate's record. Another word for this is censorship.

And yet the measure's backers blithely deny that their pet project is at all inconsistent with the Bill of Rights. Instead, they insist, it is their *critics* who are dangerous enemies of the nation's highest law and deepest traditions. Critics like Bradley A. Smith, for example.

Smith is professor of law at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. He is a leading expert on the practice and constitutionality of regulating campaigns and elections, his voluminous academic work routinely and approvingly cited in rulings issued throughout the federal and state court systems. And he is rumored to be Trent Lott's choice to fill the soon-to-be-vacant "Senate Republican" seat on the FEC. Not coincidentally, one hopes, Smith is also a dogged and eloquent opponent of the FEC's recent punitive expeditions against organizations and individuals who engage in what the agency regards as impermissible political discourse. Legislation like Shays-Meehan that would enshrine such FEC harassment in law, Bradley Smith has written, is "a patent violation of First Amendment rights."

So, predictably enough, the "reform" crowd is now busily smearing Professor Smith as a nutcase. The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University has cobbled together a crude, one-and-a-half-page opposition-research job on Smith's scholarly publications. And Brennan and two other so-called public interest groups hostile to unregulated political speech have used this cartoon account of the man's work as the basis for a widely distributed letter, ostensibly addressed to President Clinton, denouncing Smith as "unfit" for the FEC. Where they think Smith is particularly vulnerable—and what has since gotten him rebuked on all the usual editorial pages as a "Flat Earth Society poobah" and "radical"—is the professor's refusal to endorse "the fundamental anti-corruption rationale for the campaign finance laws: the rationale that was at the heart of the Supreme Court's decision in *Buckley* v. *Valeo* upholding the constitutionality of the existing campaign finance laws."

Which complaint is more than a bit ironic and entirely devious. Ironic, because the landmark 1976 *Buckley* case—invalidating, as incompatible with the First Amendment, all their most favored speech-restriction devices—is actually the one Supreme Court ruling the Brennan Center and other "reformers" are most determined to *overturn*. And devious, because it simply isn't true that you have to be a crazed extremist to question "the fundamental anti-corruption rationale" for the one basic "reform" *Buckley* did uphold: a $1,000 federal limit on individual campaign contributions. Seven months ago, the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals questioned that rationale so hard that it struck down an almost identical contribution limit in Missouri state law. And five months ago, the Supreme Court itself agreed—with Bradley A. Smith, you might say—that the constitutionality of such a limit finally, after 23 years, deserves serious review.

This momentous development is hardly a secret to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. One of Brennan's clients, Missouri state representative Joan Bray, is a party to the pending high court proceeding.

In 1994, by combination of legislation and direct

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ballot proposition, Missouri enacted the most speech-restrictive campaign finance regime in the country. Much of it was judged unconstitutional by the courts over the next few years, but its inflation-adjusted contribution limits survived into 1998. That year, an obscure, underfunded candidate named Zev David Fredman ran for state auditor in the Republican primary. A political action committee called "Shrink Missouri Government" gave Fredman the maximum allowable donation of $1,075. Shrink wanted to give Fredman more money, and Fredman wanted to accept it, so they sued Missouri in federal court, alleging that the existing contribution cap represented a constitutionally unjustified constraint on his ability to conduct effective electioneering advocacy.

A district court rejected this argument and upheld the cap, but the Eighth Circuit soon enjoined its enforcement pending appeal. Over the next few days, Shrink gave Fredman an additional $1,250. It was too little, too late; outspent by his opponent nearly thirty-fold, Fredman lost the primary. During the 1998 general election, and while the Eighth Circuit was still considering the *Shrink* case, that same PAC gave Republican Alexander Hasler $500, $225 more than the challenged statute would have allowed in a race for state representative. He, too, lost—to three-term incumbent Joan Bray, who nevertheless, apparently feeling victimized by Shrink's modest support of Hasler, joined the lawsuit as an "intervenor" on behalf of the state. Three weeks after the election, the Eighth Circuit found, on First Amendment grounds, for Shrink and Fredman against Missouri and Bray.

Now on appeal to the Supreme Court, Missouri attorney general Jay Nixon and Bray's lawyers at the Brennan Center make a fairly clear and simple argument. In the 1976 *Buckley* decision, the Supreme Court approved a $1,000 federal campaign contribution limit, finding it justified by the government's asserted interest in deterring the appearance of "corruption" commonsensically "inherent" in "large" donations of cash to candidates for national office. Nixon and Bray contend that Missouri's comparable limit, justified on the same grounds, must therefore be equally constitutional on its face. Zev David Fredman, they argue, cannot claim that this limit specially burdened the exercise of his political speech rights; other candidates operated "effectively" under the same restrictions.

But there are powerfully convincing legal and practical objections to this Missouri appeal in *Nixon* v. *Shrink*. The state does not claim that any of its candidates has ever *actually* been corrupted by a "large" contribution of, say, $1,100. And for evidence that its concern over the "appearance" of corruption is legitimate, Missouri has only ever offered the testimony of its legislators that fear over "appearances" is what they had in mind when they enacted their limits. This won't wash. Nothing in Supreme Court precedent, including *Buckley*, suggests that the government may restrict political speech simply by waving around a pledge that its intentions are honorable. In fact, in 1996, six members of the Court explicitly endorsed the view that the First Amendment only gives way to a fight against "harms" like corruption when those recited harms "are real, not merely conjectural."

A $1,000 campaign contribution is today worth but a tiny fraction what it was in 1976 when *Buckley* was decided. Who seriously believes that a single such contribution remains "large" or can any longer "corrupt" a political candidate whose campaign now typically costs millions of dollars? Who seriously doubts that the effectiveness of such a candidate's electioneering advocacy is grossly impinged by his legally enforced need to scratch around constantly for small-dollar donations? In any case, since when does the government—and not political candidates themselves—get to determine how much campaigning is minimally satisfactory?

This is just the beginning of what Missouri and its attorneys will confront before the Supreme Court. The justices will no doubt be curious about what remains implicit in the state's defense of its $1,000 limit but is made shockingly explicit in the various friend-of-the-court briefs lately filed by campaign finance "reform" advocates.

Fifteen chief state election and campaign finance officers make clear that "corruption" is merely a fig-leaf excuse for contribution limits. The real purpose of such restrictions, they write, is to provide a "check on the ability of small numbers of wealthy contributors to . . . amass campaign funds grossly out of proportion to their numbers or the potency of their ideas." Nice try, fellas, but the Supreme Court has long insisted that "leveling the playing field" like this is a goal "wholly foreign to the First Amendment."

In a separate amicus filing on behalf of a long list of prominent congressional "reformers," Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island lets slip his movement's total impatience with any constitutional barrier to its designs. The Supreme Court's First Amendment rulings have "become a straitjacket" on his favored legislation, Reed harrumphs. Congress is entitled to "broad deference in the regulation of federal elections." The high court must bow before "all such reforms" as *Congress* deems constitutional. So there.

And in an amazing footnote to the Clinton administration's official brief in *Shrink*, U.S. solicitor general Seth Waxman gives voice as never before to the campaign "reform" movement's essential contempt for political speech *per se*. The Supreme Court, Waxman

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proposes, might well grant campaign contributions the same level of First Amendment protection it accorded the "expressive conduct" at issue in the 1991 case *Barnes* v. *Glen Theatre*. Waxman does not further explain, but in *Barnes* the Court decided that it was okay for the state of Indiana to demand that female strippers cover their nipples and pubic hair with pasties and a g-string. By unavoidable inference: Participation in an American election, as a donor or recipient of campaign contributions, is an activity no more central to the First Amendment than waggling your privates at a bunch of dirty old men.

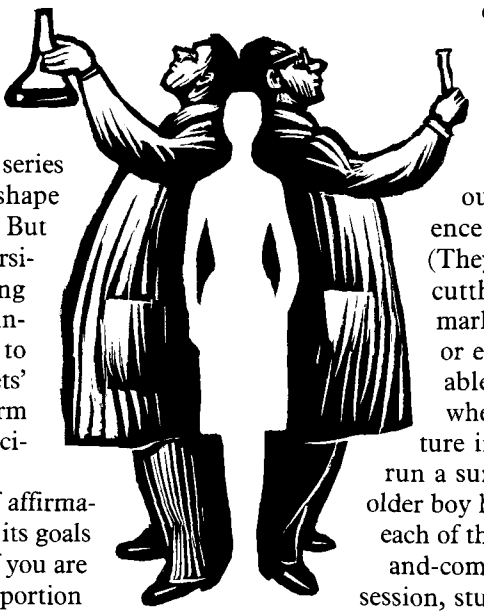
It is inconceivable that the Supreme Court will fail to repudiate the ugliness of arguments like these, however the justices ultimately resolve the practical questions presented to them by *Nixon* v. *Shrink* in oral argument this fall. When the Court does so repudiate the campaign finance "reform" movement, it would be nice if Bradley A. Smith could witness the event from a seat at the Federal Election Commission. He richly deserves the honor.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Women and Science at Yale

by David Gelernter

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION seems to be entering a new phase: As the public turns against it, universities are growing increasingly desperate in their support. I teach at Yale, where the administration has made it clear that (in particular) it wants more female professors in technology and the hard sciences. Other universities have the same goal; they have longed for women scientists for years, but their longing seems to have entered a new phase of grim determination. Yale College happens to be heavily armored in foot-thick academic independence, and we have survived a long series of ideological barrages in better shape than we are usually given credit for. But whatever the outcome at this university, the Yale administration is doing the academic world no favor by joining the crowd that has gathered to poke and prod this particular hornets' nest. The approaching hornet swarm is bad news for universities and society in general.



Kevin Chadwick

Whether or not you approve of affirmative action, it's clear that certain of its goals can be achieved and others can't. If you are determined, say, to increase the proportion of Hispanics in your undergraduate population, you can probably do it; Hispanic applicants are available. If your goal is a large increase in female science and engineering professors, you *can't* do it, because the candidates are not available. Wounded ideologues (whose programs have been tried and failed) are the most dangerous kind. We ought to prepare and plan ahead.

To do that, we need to understand why this issue has come up in the first place. It's true that women are scarce in hard sciences and engineering. Why? If anti-woman bigotry were the explanation, we could increase our female-professor count by cutting down on the bigotry. But everyone knows that anti-woman bigotry is *not* the explanation. The very notion is an Orwellian freedom-is-slavery inversion; pro-woman bias has been the rule in academia for a generation. (Of course affirmative action proponents *could* define opposition to affirmative action as evidence of anti-woman bias in itself—but in doing so, they would merely be declaring themselves right by definition.)

The real explanation is obvious: Women are less drawn to science and engineering than men are. (They're also less prone to the intense, cutthroat aggressiveness that usually marks the successful research scientist or engineer.) If you visit the comfortable, typical Connecticut suburb where I live, you can see the big picture in microcosm. The public schools run a summer program for children. Our older boy has spent a couple of weeks during each of the past several summers in a Lego-and-computers course. At the end of each session, students show off their accomplishments; I've never encountered one girl at any of these performances. Scientists and engineers are mainly grown-up versions of Lego-and-computers children. If you believe the Bigotry Theory, you must also believe that bigotry explains the scarcity of girls in our local Lego-and-computers group. If you believe *that*—that our tony, Democratic suburb is biased

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against little girls—then you'll believe anything.

In recent years, affirmative action pushers have been less inclined to accuse people of bigotry—perhaps because they know the accusation is insulting and false. Nowadays affirmative action is mainly justified by the need for "diversity"; we can't be a society where nearly all the engineering and hard science professors are male, because—we just can't. It's true that all professional football players are male, but that's different. Football is important; we can't force weak players on the NFL merely for ideological reasons. The public wouldn't stand for it. But in low-profile, unimportant areas such as physics, the public doesn't care much about the players, and ideologues have a free hand.

Honorable people have put forward the "diversity" argument, but consider what this argument implies. If women aren't being kept out of science by force, they must be *choosing* not to enter, presumably because they don't *want* to; presumably because (by and large) they don't like these fields or (on average) don't tend to excel in them, which is nearly the same thing. Yet diversity promoters have decreed that, nonetheless, more women *shall* enter engineering and science. Their attitude is either patronizing or bullying.

Affirmative action pushers have obviously decided that some fields (namely, the ones males disproportionately prefer) are just better than others (namely, the ones women choose). Otherwise, why monkey with female predilections? The result is a diversity crusade that insults women scientists *and* non-scientists. It degrades scientists by suggesting that they can't make it without a little help from Big Brother; and degrades non-scientists by suggesting that they'd be in a different field altogether if they only had the guts. Of course, modern culture amounts to one long harangue against female tastes; it's hardly surprising that the same message should underlie the latest trends in affirmative action.

To what purpose are universities willing to inflict this damage? So what if we *don't* have a lot of female engineering and science professors? Some people claim that if we don't have more women science professors, we have no hope of luring more girls into science. A circular argument: We've got to get more women into science, because otherwise we won't be able to get more women into science. And consider the implications of the underlying claim, that girls must have some sort of specially close relationship to female scientists. If that's so, then boys must be specially close to male scientists. History's greatest engineers, scientists, and mathematicians have nearly all been male. Are we quite sure we want to make this crazy claim? In any case, I can picture my own reaction if someone had told me that, say, I could only learn physics properly from a Jew. That I could only be well and truly inspired by a Jewish professor. That Christian students had an automatic "special relationship" to all the Christian professors. I would have told such a person to drop dead. Yes I *am* closer to Jews than Christians in certain ways—and to parrot-lovers than cat-fanciers in certain other ways. But none of these facts needed to be or ought to have been reflected in the demographics of the Yale faculty.

We opponents of affirmative action don't claim that we are defending a system of pure merit against a barbarian onslaught. Everyone who holds a good academic position owes it in some degree to luck. There is no such thing as a university powered by pure intellectual merit. Even if there were, we wouldn't like it, because other kinds of merit (for example spiritual) count too. We aren't defending a perfect system against an idea that would destroy it. We are defending a fairly good system (and America's hard science and technology *is* fairly good) against an idea that is bound to fail and, along the way, to insult the people it's supposed to help.

And after it *does* fail? After it becomes clear that no large increase in numbers of female engineers and hard scientists is going to materialize? The next step is frighteningly clear. The administrators who are hot for affirmative action today will be hot for restricted admissions tomorrow. Next step: male quotas on course enrollments and majors. Sound impossible? Can't believe that any college would dare tell your son, "forget that computer science course; male enrollment is maxed out. Can we show you something in Film Studies?"

It's a nightmare, but we'd be foolish not to take it seriously. This is *exactly* what colleges across the country are doing today to their aspiring male athletes. The affirmative action pushers wanted more college women to play sports. Women didn't feel like it. You can't force women to play if they don't want to. So if a spurious "equality" is your goal, your only choice in the long run is to jettison men's sports, as universities across the country now routinely do. If universities are willing to jettison aspiring male athletes in the name of equality, why not aspiring male physicists? Because physics is more important than sports? Many people, academics and otherwise, don't believe that. In any case, the ditching of men's athletics proves that ideologues can undertake a policy that any normal person would regard as malicious and stupid and get away with it. The public has been conditioned to take anything the bureaucrats dish out and like it. The future is grim unless we start worrying about it right now.

David Gelernter is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Hormel's Chilly Reception

by Sam Dealey

Nothing turns Republicans into awkward, tongue-tied bumblers quite the way the issue of homosexuality does. Take President Clinton's appointment of gay activist and philanthropist James Hormel as ambassador to Luxembourg.

Hormel's nomination had languished in the Senate for well over a year, blocked by Republicans. When Congress dispersed for Memorial Day weekend, the president made a recess appointment—typically used in emergencies when the Senate is out of town for more than a week. But this was no emergency; it was a poke in the eye, clearly designed to provoke Hormel's Republican detractors. Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma obliged by vowing to put a hold on all other administration nominations needing Senate approval—both federal judges and executive-branch appointees—unless Clinton withdraws Hormel's appointment. Majority Leader Trent Lott has (reluctantly) given Inhofe his support.

The Hormel appointment has been a political flashpoint for religious conservatives and gay-rights activists since Clinton first announced it in October 1997. Hormel, heir to the multi-million dollar meatpacking company that bears the family name, is most infamous for seeming to applaud the antics of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of habit-wearing drag queens, during a gay-pride march in San Francisco in 1996.

At a time when Kosovo and budget priorities dominate the political agenda, Hormel's nomination really isn't anyone's most pressing problem. But it injected an issue into the political arena that terrifies most GOP politicians, and it wasn't surprising that virtually none of the Republican presidential candidates was eager to comment on it.

"Governor Bush would make extremely limited use of the recess appointment power," George W. campaign spokesman David Beckwith says, "and never to make political points." Was the president making a political point with Hormel's appointment? "I'll just let it sit at that," Beckwith demurs. The Texas governor has a 16-point lead in the polls, and it is clear his campaign isn't about to make any waves.

Would Bush have appointed Hormel? He would not have, says Beckwith, "because Mr. Hormel does not share his conservative political philosophy or his political agenda." What is Bush's conservative political philosophy and political agenda with respect to homosexuality?

Beckwith referred me to an April 9 *New York Times* article. "As a general statement," Bush told the paper, "if someone can do a job, and a job that he's qualified for, that person . . . ought to be allowed to do his job."

And gays? What's the governor's stance? "Nobody would be disqualified on the basis of sexual orientation," Beckwith says. But what is Bush's political stance on homosexuality? "He would appoint people who have the same political agenda as he does and not a different one," Beckwith explains. Oh.

Howard Opinsky, campaign spokesman for Sen. John McCain of Arizona, says that while the senator "hasn't given [the Hormel nomination] a whole lot of

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thought," generally, "elections have consequences, and presidents have the right to choose who they want." Opinski says Hormel "personally assured" McCain that he would "advance the interests of the United States. And the senator takes him at his word."

But of course it's Hormel's words that have conservatives in a tizzy. Andrea Sheldon, who heads the Traditional Values Coalition, calls Hormel a "purveyor of smut." She mentions the James Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library, for which the new ambassador contributed $500,000 and some of his favorite books. "I've personally been to the Hormel library," says Sheldon. "There's a coloring book with, with female genitalia. It's called the—well, it starts with a 'C' and it's four letters. It's the 'Blank' Coloring Book."

Sheldon suspects Hormel's appointment was a ploy to rally the sleepy Gore campaign and turn the Republican candidates against each other. "I mean, it wasn't like there was a great need for an ambassador to Luxembourg," says Sheldon. "Al Gore is linked at the hip with Hormel."

"It's kind of similar to appointing Larry Flynt ambassador," says Karen Hickey, campaign spokesperson for Sen. Bob Smith for New Hampshire, adding, "Frankly, the materials [in the Hormel library] are pornographic." Really? How do you mean? "We have a lot of the materials. I can get it for you."

But then Hickey backs off a bit, retreating to the issue of anti-Catholicism. "It's not really the fact that he's homosexual. It's the fact that, when appointing leaders of the country, the president should be in a position to appoint people who are leaders. The senator doesn't think Hormel should be appointed anywhere—especially to a country that's 95 percent Catholic."

Gary Bauer, the erstwhile president of the Family Research Council, agrees. "The bottom line here is that, at the very least, Hormel gives evidence of prima facie bigotry toward people of faith generally and toward Catholics particularly. And that's reason enough not to allow him to be an ambassador that represents the United States, particularly to a Catholic country," he says in an interview.

"I think generally there's a growing squishiness within the Republican party that makes supposed leaders afraid to talk about almost anything," Bauer says. "So if we don't have confidence in our agenda, I don't know how we can expect the American people to."

A propos of squishiness, the Elizabeth Dole campaign, taking my third call, again promised that spokesman Ari Fleischer would "get right back" to me. This time he did. "I have not had the opportunity to discuss the Hormel issue with Mrs. Dole," says Fleisher. Apparently she'd been traveling all day. *All* day? "I will give it my best shot."

James Hormel Kent Lemon

The campaign of Steve Forbes, who's spent the last four years courting social conservatives, promised to call back, too, but never did. Former vice president Dan Quayle, however, responded. "I would not nominate individuals who support political objectives contrary to the goals of my administration," says the vice-president, "and the gay-rights agenda falls in that category."

Pat Buchanan's campaign response was more amusing. "Well, we don't really have a campaign spokesman," says somebody in Buchanan's campaign press office. "But if he was going to do a release on it, he probably would have done it already. It's a couple of days old," he says. Surely that doesn't preclude comment now? "Well, we might have a position paper on something like that. I'll go look and see what I can find." An hour later, a phone message was waiting. "We did a search of Pat's old columns and couldn't find anything."

Time to give the gay-rights Log Cabin Republicans a call on Hormel. "We support his ability to be judged on his merits," says Kevin Ivers. "He's qualified. I don't know why he shouldn't be allowed to be confirmed." But Hormel's a *Democrat*. "This transcends partisanship," Ivers says. "It transcends everything else. This is character assassination. James Hormel is a victim of partisanship and the far right."

Actually, he's an ambassador, not a victim. As they stumble and duck, it's the GOP presidential candidates who are starting to look like victims of Hormel's nomination.

Sam Dealey is a staff writer for the **Hill** *newspaper.*

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God Is My Campaign Manager

by Tucker Carlson

The day after the 1984 Republican convention, Ronald Reagan gave a speech to a group of preachers in Dallas in which he ruminated on the role of religion in public life. "The truth is," Reagan said, "that politics and morality are inseparable. . . . Our government needs the church because only those humble enough to admit they are sinners can bring to democracy the tolerance it requires in order to survive."

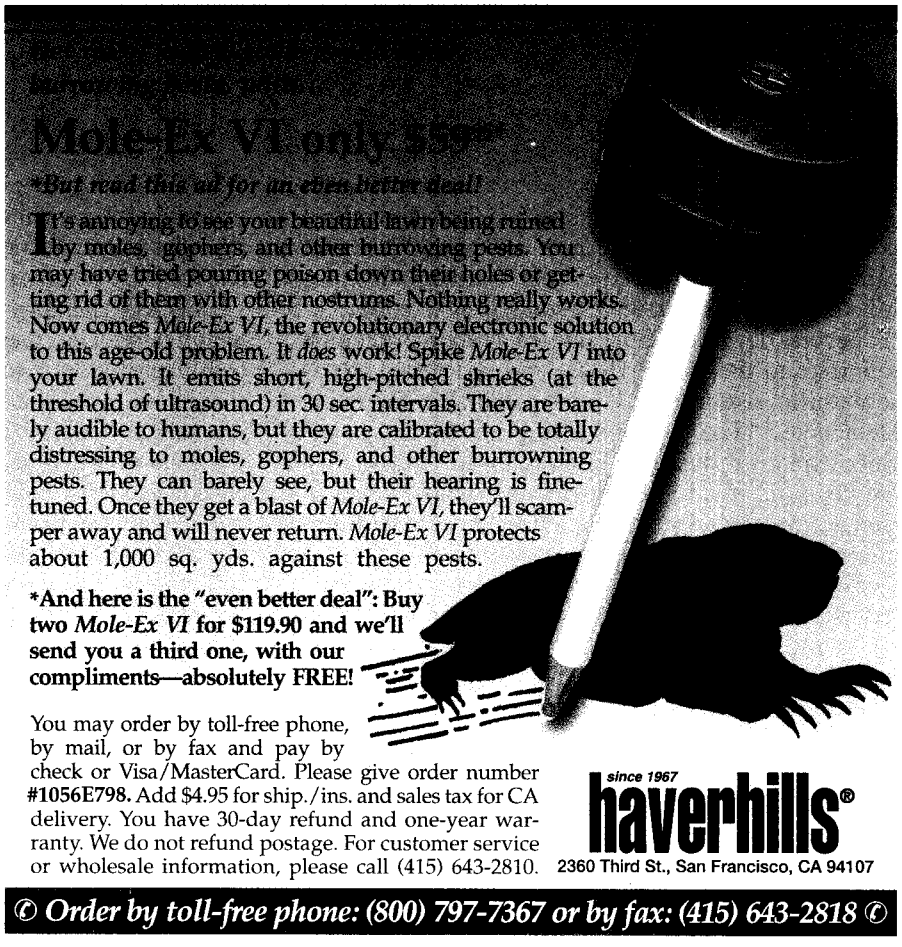
Reagan's remarks were considered wildly controversial. "President Reagan today challenged the constitutional separation of church and state," began one of the first wire stories written about the speech. Within hours his political enemies pounced. Challenger Walter Mondale accused Reagan and other members of the "extreme fringe" of engaging in "moral McCarthyism" and of seeking to create a theocracy. *Time* magazine agreed. "On every major issue," *Time* concluded, Reagan has "shown a willingness to use government authority to impose sectarian views on the population at large."

The White House recoiled in horror. Under pressure from his advisers, notably James Baker, Reagan all but apologized for getting theological in public. "I was only talking about it because I was speaking at a prayer breakfast," the president told reporters. His next major address on religion, given at a B'nai B'rith convention in Washington a few weeks later, was mostly about the glories of religious pluralism and the "wall in our Constitution separating church and state."

The Dallas speech solidified Reagan's reputation among liberals as a fundamentalist nut, but in retrospect his musings on religion are notable for what they didn't contain. For all his references to God, Reagan didn't elaborate on his personal faith. He didn't describe mandates he had received from on high. He didn't refer to his prayer life or detail his conversion experience. (Nor, in fact, did Reagan go to church very often.) Probably not one American in a hundred remembers, or ever knew, that he is a Presbyterian. To this day, it's not clear what, exactly, Reagan believes about God.

There are few such mysteries left in American politics. Voters now know the spiritual biographies of most of the leading candidates in the 2000 presidential race. They know that Elizabeth Dole began her "total commitment to Christ" while attending a Capitol Hill Bible study. They know that George W. Bush found God after a walk on the beach with Billy Graham. They know that John Kasich turned to a higher power when his parents were killed in a car accident. Just the other day they learned that Al Gore uses his faith to answer "any important question" he faces in life. Voters know a lot more about the religious beliefs of these would-be presidents than they knew about Reagan's. Is it an improvement?

Almost everyone agrees that for some candidates



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it's a necessity. Polls show that after two Clinton terms, "character" questions will matter far more in the 2000 presidential election than they did in the previous two. Professing religious faith is a quick and effective way for a candidate to establish his bona fides as a decent person. It's also a handy way for Republicans with wobbly stands on abortion and gay rights to mollify social conservatives. (Significantly, the candidates with the strongest positions on issues that religious conservatives care about—Gary Bauer, Alan Keyes, Pat Buchanan, and Steve Forbes—almost never talk about their own religious experiences.)

For Al Gore, talking about God is a means to distance himself from his boss—shorthand, as A.N. Wilson put it in the *New York Times*, for: "Tipper and I, despite having spent the last seven years in the Clinton Administration, entirely sympathize with those of you who think the White House is morally challenged." Gore began the process in May when he gave a speech in Atlanta in which he endorsed steering federal funds to faith-based social service organizations, an idea that until that point had been promoted almost exclusively by conservatives. The speech received relatively little attention in the press, but the Republicans who read it were shocked. "This is something that would have been outrageous for a Democratic candidate to say a few years ago," says Jeff Bell, a longtime political strategist who is now advising the Bauer campaign. "It would have been unimaginable for Michael Dukakis to have said something like that."

THOUGH HE USED THE G-WORD, JOHN KASICH'S MINI-SERMON WAS CLOSER TO SELF-HELP THAN CHRISTIANITY.

Several days later, Gore invited a group of religion reporters to the White House and proceeded to say something else previously unimaginable for many Democrats. "The purpose of life is to glorify God," Gore explained during a briefing on his spirituality. "My own faith is rooted in the unshakable belief in God as creator and sustainer, a deeply personal interpretation of, and relationship with, Christ."

Gore's testimony was met with some skepticism. "As with everything Gore does, this seems calculated," wrote one reporter who witnessed it. But that doesn't mean it won't work. Both Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton received significant support from churchgoers after using religious language in their first campaigns. Which is not surprising. On a political level, religious voters aren't that different from an ethnic group. A politician who wants to woo Italian voters marches in the Columbus Day parade. A candidate who wants to reach evangelicals talks about his conversion experience.

In fact, says Michael Cromartie, director of the Evangelical Studies Project at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, some Christian voters are likely to reflexively vote for one of their own. "In 1988," says Cromartie, "someone I knew called and asked me if I was supporting Pat Robertson for president. I said I wasn't and he said, 'But he's a Christian brother.' I said, 'So what? He's a nut case.' For evangelicals, personal piety often covers a variety of political sins."

Not to mention theological ones, since what passes for Bible thumping in the political world rarely bears much resemblance to what most evangelicals hear in church on Sunday. "I believe that all people, young and old, but especially the young, need to hear that religion is not about judgment," John Kasich informed the Columbus Urban League during a speech in May. "Religion is not a finger coming out of the sky telling us where we have fallen short. Religion is about the values handed down from God that teach us about our potential as human beings to get it right."

Though he used the G-word, Kasich's mini-sermon was closer to self-help than Christianity, more Deepak Chopra than Jerry Falwell. Religion—at least the major varieties practiced in the United States—*is* to a large extent "about" judgment. It is not primarily "about our potential as human beings." Not that any ambitious politician would dare tell an audience of baby boomers that.

Suspect theology or not, many evangelicals are happy to see God mentioned at all in politics. "I welcome reminders from all sorts of candidates that there's an objective reality," says Marvin Olasky, a journalism professor at the University of Texas whose writings on faith-based welfare reform have influenced George W. Bush. The key to judging an ostensibly religious politician's sincerity, Olasky says, is in his works. If a candidate genuinely believes in God, he'll vote as if he does, looking to prayer and the Bible for guidance as he makes decisions about policy. Otherwise, Olasky says, it's probably phony. "Professions of faith without any evidence of adherence to biblical principles are suspicious."

On the other hand, professing adherence to biblical principles is politically dangerous. No mainstream candidate wants to come off as a Jesus freak, not even Elizabeth Dole, who is. Dole spent a good part of the '80s and '90s giving speeches about "the difference Jesus Christ has made in my life"; even now, on the campaign trail, she sets aside 30 minutes a day to read

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the Bible. There is no question that when she talks about her belief in God, she means it. Religious faith, says her spokesman Ari Fleischer, "is who she is, that's what makes her tick, that's a major part of her life, that's a major part of her soul, that's a major part of her strength. Her faith affects every ounce of her being."

But according to Fleischer, it doesn't affect every part of her political platform. "I don't know that I could say that there's any particular public policy issue that's faith based for Elizabeth Dole," he says. "I think it's much more values based, and her values are driven in good part by her faith. It's a complicated mix, as it should be for a person of religion."

Too complicated, certainly, for the average voter to figure out. And that's probably the point. Like everybody else talking God these days, Dole seeks to appear religious enough to comfort voters, but not so devout that she scares them—a decent person, but not someone who's going to speak in tongues or get boorish about unborn babies. It's a tough balance to strike, maybe impossible. Which may explain why presidential candidates didn't used to talk about religion.

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

WIZARDS OF OZONE

by Randall Lutter and Christopher DeMuth

IN MAY, THE U.S. CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS for the District of Columbia blocked the Clinton administration's air-quality standards for ozone and particulate matter. The decision, *American Trucking Associations* v. *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, is a victory for democracy over bureaucracy. The court found that EPA's standards amounted to sheer unexplained policy judgments—an expression of bureaucratic willfulness, rather than an application of the Clean Air Act. EPA thereby ran afoul of the "non-delegation doctrine," which courts use to enforce the constitutional clause giving "all legislative powers" to Congress.

EPA'S CLEAN-AIR RULES ARE NOT JUST A CASE OF EXECUTIVE-BRANCH USURPATION. THEY REFLECT RIGID LEGISLATION AND FLUID SCIENCE.

The court held that in setting its air-quality standards, EPA had not been guided by any "intelligible principles" derived from the act. The executive branch's power is too great, said the court, if the regulators are "free to pick any point between zero and a hair below the concentrations yielding London's Killer Fog" (which resulted in 4,000 deaths in one week in 1952). When de facto legislative power resides in the executive branch, accountability and the separation of powers are undermined.

But EPA's clean-air rules are not simply a case of executive-branch usurpation (or legislative-branch abdication). They reflect a deeper problem involving rigid legislation and fluid science.

In 1970, when Congress directed EPA to set air-quality standards "requisite to protect the public health" with an "adequate margin of safety," it assumed that epidemiologists and biologists could determine "threshold" levels of pollution dividing serious health risks from negligible risks. That assumption, we now know, was wrong. For ozone, EPA's Scientific Advisory Board reported in 1996 that there is no threshold below which health risks disappear. Instead, as ozone declines to natural background levels, ozone-related respiratory problems decline more or less continuously. For particulate matter, EPA could not determine whether a threshold exists.

Indeed, the effects of the air pollution in question on health are highly uncertain or exceedingly small. For ozone, EPA estimated that moving from the current standard to a standard of 80 parts per billion would very slightly reduce hospital admissions of asthmatics and the incidence of temporary "lung function impairments" (detectable only by monitors applied to subjects exercising continuously for several hours).

But given that air pollutants at low concentrations present *some* health risks, what "intelligible principle" should a conscientious EPA apply "to protect the public health" with an "adequate margin of safety"?

A zero-pollution standard is no answer, since achieving it is impossible and the attempt would impose economic costs that would eventually degrade environmental conditions and so harm the public health. A better solution is for Congress to amend the Clean Air Act. Congress could write air-quality standards into the law (a prospect that horrifies everyone from the Sierra Club to the American Coal Founda-

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tion). Or it could charge EPA with setting standards under some new principle—such as balancing the costs and benefits of cleaning the air.

A sensible principle would be to tighten air-quality standards until the benefits of further incremental improvements balance the costs. We favor this approach on policy grounds. Pollution control, no less than national defense or any other activity of government, should operate within a budget. In addition, this approach has the advantage of resolving the constitutional problem. An air-quality standard based on both costs and benefits would not be arbitrary. Setting such a standard would require lots of technical information and a sound cost-benefit analysis, but that is what regulatory agencies are supposed to be good at.

In the case of ozone, the court required EPA to pursue a special application of this approach. Research cited in EPA's rulemaking record shows that reducing atmospheric ozone has significant health *costs* as well as benefits. But EPA refused to consider those costs, essentially on grounds that the Clean Air Act is not concerned with harm to health caused by pollution reduction. All three judges disagreed; they directed EPA to consider all the identifiable health effects of ozone, positive and negative, and adopt a standard intended to produce *net benefits* to public health. This takes some explaining.

Kevin Chadwick

As is well known, ozone far above the earth plays an important role in protecting people from exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UV), which causes skin cancers, cataracts, and other ills. That is why the United States and other nations have, at substantial cost, banned substances that contribute to ozone depletion. But recent research—including an article by one of us, Randall Lutter, and Christopher Wolz published in *Environmental Science & Technology*—demonstrates that ozone near the ground, where EPA's air-quality standards have their effect, provides additional, independent protection against solar UV radiation. Lutter and Wolz, whose work the court cited, showed that the health benefits of that protection are as well understood as the respiratory problems caused by ozone. Moreover, EPA's ozone standard could *increase* UV-related health problems by more than it reduced respiratory health problems.

Prompted by this and other research, EPA conducted its own study, which went beyond the earlier work and took a stab at quantifying the UV-related harm likely to result from the new ozone standard. The study noted that the methods for estimating changes in UV exposure and the resulting incidence of skin cancer associated with various ozone levels are "well established." Using these methods, the study projected that lowering the ozone standard would cause an additional 700 nonmelanoma skin cancers each year. Regrettably, EPA did not pursue the matter, on grounds that it could not adequately quantify the health effects; its study is absent from the record submitted to the circuit court.

How do those ill effects compare with the respiratory benefits of a lower ozone standard? EPA and other regulatory agencies have well-developed procedures for placing a monetary value on deaths and various forms of disease and incapacity. Applying those procedures, EPA estimated the respiratory-health improvements from the new standard to be worth $21 million to $34 million per year. The agency did not, of course, value the UV-related health costs, but its own valuation methods yield an estimate of $70 million to $96 million per year, more than twice the benefits.

These estimates are highly uncertain. Nevertheless, we think it likely that the damage to health from UV exposure resulting from EPA's new ozone standard would be greater than the respiratory-health benefits. Thus, the new standard, which EPA estimates would cost about $10 billion per year, would produce a small net deterioration in public health. Obviously, it would be better to leave the standard alone.

It is extremely unlikely, however, that EPA will consider the costs of more stringent standards in any form. EPA administrator Carol Browner has said repeatedly that the standards are based on the "best available science." But she has also called the appeals court's unanimous finding on UV health effects "one of the most bizarre sections of the decision . . . [seeming] to conclude that more pollution could even be good for public health—that skies dark with pollution

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will help prevent skin cancer." This is, to put it politely, disinformation. Ozone at the levels in question is invisible and, indeed, requires sensitive monitoring equipment to detect, while its health benefits are documented in EPA's own research.

Some EPA watchers have long suspected that the agency's unspoken agenda is gradually to ratchet down all pollution standards to zero. The impulse driving this agenda may be mere bureaucratic power seeking or misguided environmental idealism. Other observers have seen the agency as a well-intentioned, competent, but beleaguered technocratic protector of our environment. EPA's handling of the UV issue in this critically important case shows which view is correct: The agency flatly dismisses the UV-related health benefits of ozone because environmental theology forbids their existence.

Randall Lutter is a resident scholar and Christopher DeMuth is president of the American Enterprise Institute; both are fellows of the AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies.

Our Strategic Trade Partner?

by William Hawkins

President Clinton announced on June 3 that he would again waive the law and grant a one-year extension of China's "normal trade relations" (NTR) with the United States. "Maintaining NTR with China," he said, would "promote America's economic and security interests."

Clinton's waiver drew immediate applause from those who have economic interests in China. The U.S.-China Business Council, which claims "300 leading companies" as members, released the following statement: "The U.S.-China Business Council believes that this year ought to be no different. In spite of the serious controversies that have arisen between the U.S. and China in recent weeks, the economic relationship of the two nations brings benefits to both, and undergirds all aspects of the broad U.S.-China engagement."

Clinton was required by law to make his announcement on trade relations with China by June 3, and as soon as the Cox Report outlining Beijing's threat to U.S. security was made public, on May 25, the business press started damage control. A *Financial Times* editorial on May 26 called on Washington to be "tough on security and positive on trade." Two days later, the *Journal of Commerce* asserted, "The simple fact is that the overall issue of trade with China is largely separate from the troubling defense issues."

In truth, nothing could be more simple-minded (and self-serving) than to claim that economic activity is conducted in a vacuum and has no impact on the balance of power. Moreover, supporters typically exaggerate the economic benefits of trading with China.

Thus, Clinton, in his statement, called normal trade relations "good for Americans," adding, "Our exports to China have quadrupled over the past decade." With characteristic verbal ingenuity, the president used "quadruple" to give an impression the figures do not warrant. The actual importance of the China market to the American economy is minuscule. In 1998, the United States exported only $14.3 billion worth of goods to China, barely 2 percent of American exports. This was an increase of only $5.5 billion over 1993. During this same five-year period, U.S. goods exported to the rest of the world increased by $204 billion. Even in a state of economic depression, Japan and the Pacific Rim provided an export market for American goods worth $142 billion in 1998, nearly ten times that of China.

What business sees in China is not an export market, but a chance to profit from the development of Chinese capabilities. The USA*Engage Web site, which claims to speak for over 500 firms, drools over China's ten-year plan for $750 billion in domestic infrastructure projects. A recent study by the U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of Export Administration found that "the underlying and stated objectives of China's foreign investment and trade policies . . . are modernization and self-sufficiency of China's industrial and military sectors."

Beijing's economic policy conforms with the doctrine of Jean Baptiste Colbert, the mercantilist finance minister of Louis XIV who believed that "trade is the basis of finance, and finance is the sinew of war." Paul Kennedy has noted that "the more China pushes forward with its economic expansion in a Colbertian, étatiste fashion, the more likely that development will have power-political implications." It is these implications that must be the concern of U.S. national policy makers.

Trade with America facilitates a pro-China shift in the Asian balance of power in four major ways.

(1) China's trade surplus with the United States

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provides Beijing with the foreign exchange needed to buy foreign weapons and military technology. This hard-currency surplus gave China $58 billion in 1998 and $215 billion since 1994. Russia has been the main source for arms. As Princeton's Kent Calder has observed, with Russia holding the greatest military yard sale in history, "the Chinese, flush with hard currency from their soaring, multi-billion-dollar transpacific trade surpluses, stocked up." And the Chinese hoard of dollars is tempting other countries, including some in NATO, to do military deals with Beijing.

Chinese purchases have spanned the entire spectrum of weapons systems, but the emphasis has been on improving air, missile, and naval capabilities in order to project power around the Pacific Rim—that is, toward American allies. Open access to the U.S. market is financing a military buildup that threatens the balance of power both in Asia and beyond, as China extends to rogue states in other parts of the world the technology it acquires.

(2) An enormous amount of militarily valuable "dual use" technology is transferred by American firms in the course of their normal operations in China. Though media attention has focused on a few sensational cases, such as the Loral/Hughes satellite-launcher scandal, technology transfer is an everyday occurrence. The Bureau of Export Administration's report on "U.S. Commercial Technology Transfers to the People's Republic of China" confirms this, noting: "The majority of industry representatives interviewed for this study clearly stated that technology transfers are required to do business in China," and, "U.S. high-tech firms seem willing to pay the price—technology transfers—in exchange for limited market access."

The Bureau of Export Administration also found that "China's investment policies are geared toward shifting foreign investment into the central and western parts of China. . . . China's national laboratories and the majority of China's military/industrial enterprises are located in this region, some of which are involved in foreign joint ventures." For example, Pratt & Whitney's Canadian unit and China National South Aeroengine & Machinery Co. formed a joint venture to produce components for gas-turbine and jet engines that could be adapted to cruise missiles. Though officially these new engines will be for civilian use, the site chosen was a plant that produced engines for cruise missiles.

(3) China's aggressive export strategy, encouraged by easy access to the U.S. market, has undermined the economic stability of the Pacific Rim. China and the Pacific Rim states are direct competitors. They all export similar products: labor-intensive manufactured goods such as footwear and apparel, electrical machinery, computers, consumer electronics, and toys. As export-led strategies collided, world prices for manufactured exports started to fall in 1996. By 1997, many of the Rim economies saw their current accounts deficits reach crisis levels.

China gained an edge on its trade rivals by devaluing its currency in 1994. Within a year, it moved from a trade deficit to a trade surplus. Thanks to Washington's unconditional grants of most-favored-nation trade status, China was able to double its share of the American market in many sectors at the expense of the Rim.

Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have had to make major cuts in their defense programs (including cancellation of American equipment orders). On Asia's other flank, South Korea has done the same. The Philippines needs economic expansion to finance the modernization of its anemic armed forces in the face of Chinese expansion in the Spratly Islands. Across the region, joint exercises with the U.S. military are being cut back. Most important, since the already vulnerable Japanese banks have invested heavily in Southeast Asia, the region's economic fragility undermines both anchors of the U.S. security system on the Pacific Rim, Japan and the Association of South East Asian Nations. Ending the "normal" trade status of a China whose behavior is far from normal would give the trade advantage back to our friends and allies.

(4) As transnational corporations form closer commercial alliances with the Beijing regime, China gains a strong voice in American domestic politics through the lobbying of business groups and the media. Proponents of "engagement" may talk of commerce as a vehicle of reform in China, but the fact is that capitalist democracies are far more open to foreign influence than are authoritarian one-party states. American firms know that only by supporting an appeasement policy in Washington that hobbles efforts to respond to Chinese provocations can they maintain a "friendly" environment hospitable to their interests in China.

Instead of feeding the ambitions of Chinese mercantilists, American trade should follow the American flag. The axiom is that both parties benefit from trade. But in the case of trade between American corporations and the Beijing regime, the gain to the corporations takes the form of private profit while the gain to the regime is an increase in its military-industrial capabilities. This increase in China's strength poses a threat to American national interests. The cost of meeting that threat—not to mention the cost of failing to meet it—swamps the private commercial gains in scale and importance to our country.

William R. Hawkins is a visiting fellow at the U.S. Business and Industry Council in Washington, D.C.

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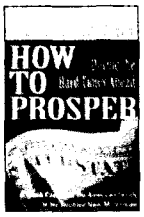

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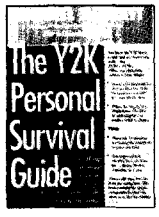

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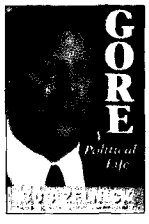

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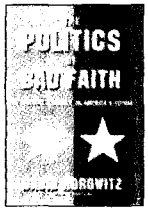

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Notes on the Hairless Man

By David Skinner

Men without chests—that was C.S. Lewis's striking description of graduates of the postwar English schools, with their faculties trained to dismiss the virtues of patriotism and piety. These Englishmen, Lewis worried, would become lifelong enemies of the sublime, unable and unwilling, when push came to shove, to defend themselves or their countrymen. American men, I am happy to report—even the sensitive new age guys—still have something of a chest, thanks to our enduring fitness mania. But have you noticed how bare those chests are? Late twentieth-century America is increasingly a land not of men without chests but of men without chest hair.

I first realized this a couple of years ago while watching the otherwise forgettable B-movie romance *Picture Perfect*, starring Jennifer Aniston and Kevin Bacon, who was then just under 40. As the two characters get ready to, well, put the 13 in PG-13, Bacon takes off his shirt and his chest is completely hairless. Okay, Kevin Bacon may not prove much. But not long after that, I saw Al Pacino, whose fuzzy talent has graced the screen in such classics as *Scarface* and *Serpico*, appearing as hairless as an angel in *The Devil's Advocate*. (Once you're aware of the hairless-man phenomenon, by the way, you can no longer see a movie without noticing it. Sorry.)

Now, only 20 percent or so of adult white males are totally without what's technically referred to as "terminal pigmented chest hair." And yet, in the last few years, practically every Hollywood male sex symbol, when standing half-dressed for his more intimate scenes, looks as if he has absolutely no chest hair. Tom Cruise. Matt Damon. Keanu Reeves. Brad Pitt. All of them look like boys. One even sees older actors depilated to look like the boy-man stars who now capture every significant romantic role. The traditional Hollywood aesthetic in which old was never sexy has been carried to a new extreme: Now only the immature is sexy. Forget heroin chic, the hip aesthetic of the early '90s; say hello to permanent adolescence. And this new look trickles down. A big-city cop of my acquaintance confided not long ago that he shaves his chest. For several years now waxing salons have not been for women only. One of these days, no doubt, a cosmetic surgeon will come up with the philosopher's stone of our age—how to transplant hair from men's chests to their heads—and make a fortune.

ONCE YOU'RE AWARE OF THE HAIRLESS-MAN PHENOMENON, YOU CAN NO LONGER SEE A MOVIE WITHOUT NOTICING IT. SORRY.

But the hairless man represents more than just a simple change in cosmetic fashions, like the widening and narrowing of ties. These men without chest hair carry on, knowingly or not, quite a tradition. In ancient Rome and Greece, the romantic associations of men and boys were jeopardized by the appearance of facial and bodily hair. It meant the boy was now a man, which meant he was no longer available. The Roman epigrammatist Martial lampooned men who plucked their hair to stay boyish.

Why pluck the hairs from your gray fanny?
That's a chic touch which men admire
In girls, not in a flagrant granny.

Martial also took issue with a man who insisted on calling him brother (*fratere*), a term that also meant lover:

I'm shaggy-legged and bristle-cheeked
Daily you depilate

David Skinner is an associate editor of The Weekly Standard.

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Your silky skin. Your voice is light;
You lisp in a charming way—
My voice, as my loins can testify,
Is gruff, and so, I'll say:

We're less alike than eagles and doves
Or lions and does, so Mister
Don't call me "brother," or
I'll have to call you sister.

Obviously today, as ever, the phenomenon cannot be disentangled from the romantic ideals of male homosexuals. As *Salon* columnist Camille Paglia authoritatively noted in a recent piece, "depilation has become highly fashionable in the gay male world. . . . Not since Greek athletes scraped their oiled, sandy bodies with the *strigil* . . . have men had such a fetish for girl-smooth skin." But what is most interesting about the hairless man is that he is no longer exclusively gay; he is, rather, the American male ideal.

Last decade's gay "clone" has become this decade's hetero stud. The subject of countless overwrought academic "queer theory" treatises, the gay "clone" was usually defined as an archetypal boy cruising men on the street-corners and in the clubs of big cities. Boyish and neatly dressed (jeans and T-shirt ironed), he displayed a vanity and sense of style that were a "perfect" representation of manliness. And then, somewhere along the line, the straight male began to imitate him. To see the gay clone today, one need only flip through magazines like *Men's Fitness* or *Men's Health*, two glossies that have made vanity a lifestyle.

A typical article from *Men's Health* tells readers how to decrease calories and stress ("Assign numerical values to the major parts of your life, such as work, marriage, and family; this can help you better apportion your time") while increasing earnings, physical strength, and sex drive. And "if Jane Goodall's research assistants have been creeping around your backyard, perhaps it's time to ask a dermatologist about hair removal with lasers. . . . A typical back treatment takes four hours and costs $500 to $2,000. Nose and ear procedures cost around $200. Backside denuding is at the doctor's discretion." After which, you can turn over and be made to look like the hairless man on the magazine cover. These magazines are an education in how to look exactly like a '90s man without having to think about what it means to be one.

Nor is this simply another case of gay fashion being a trendsetter for straights. The newly prominent hairless man is a sign of the convergence of gay and straight culture. Male vanity and the desire to prolong adolescence are becoming mainstream traits, no longer the markers of a subculture. Just two years after Ellen DeGeneres's "coming out" scored a ratings bonanza for her then-declining, now-off-the-air TV

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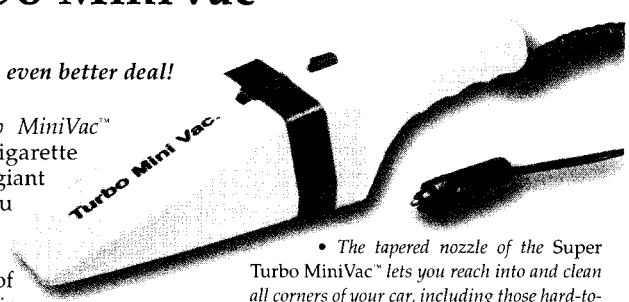

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show, the arguments between gay activists and their critics over how visible homosexuality should be on prime time TV are already seeming quaint. Such arguments presume that there is a dominant, hostile majority culture. But there isn't. There are only tiny protest groups that get laughed at when they count the number of gay characters in TV shows and movies. The mainstream culture is the culture of the hairless man, at best indifferent to old-fashioned, grown-up male traits.

Here is a mainstream cultural moment. Cinematic stud Mark Wahlberg was interviewed earlier this year by Matt Lauer on the *Today* show. By the admittedly bland standards of morning television, the contrast in personalities should have made it an interesting conversation: Strong silent type who recently played an outsized porn star in the movie *Boogie Nights* confronts Sensitive New Age Guy, the kind of softy Americans want to see first thing in the morning. Instead, the only contrast in the interview was that of a regular SNAG versus a post-macho SNAG. It took Wahlberg, the post-macho SNAG, only seconds to reveal his vulnerable side: "It's kind of hard, you know, because the whole macho thing, you know, it's—coming from Boston, it's—it's also an—an athletic place, you know, and there's not too much opportunity there. So being the tough guy is the thing to do. . . . It was—it was difficult to—to accept the role in *Boogie Nights* only because I was—and it's stupid now to think about it, but I was worried about what my friends would think, you know, and—and stuff like that . . ."

THE POP BAND "SPICE GIRLS" WAS PRACTICALLY A PROPAGANDA SQUAD DETACHED TO DEMOTE EROS TO THE STATUS OF FRIENDSHIP.

Machismo is never so talked about as when it is absent. But there was a worthwhile question answered by the interview: What do you get when you put two SNAGS together? Answer: a conversation about being gay.

LAUER: You said in an article in *Premiere* magazine that when you were growing up, it was tough to repress the fact that you were . . . creative. It was a little bit like being gay and not being able to tell your parents.

WAHLBERG: Yeah.

LAUER: How does it feel to be in a place right now where it's cool to be gay—sorry, it's cool to be creative? You know what, it could be either way.

WAHLBERG: It's cool to be gay, too. It's cool to be gay.

LAUER: I loved your look when I said it. You kind of looked at me and said 'What?'

WAHLBERG: It's cool to be gay, too.

In fact, there is nothing ironic in Wahlberg's playing spokesman for the gay community. The rapper formerly known as Marky Mark was central to one of the most important sightings of the hairless man. Before his success in *Boogie Nights* had him making appearances on Charlie Rose and other talk shows, Wahlberg was a model for the famous Calvin Klein ad that appeared in countless magazines, but nowhere more prominently than on that humongous billboard above Times Square. Striking a pose in his skivvies, Wahlberg looked like a bit of rough trade freshly showered for a special occasion. But more important, he was, except for a butchy hairdo, as smooth skinned as the day he was born.

Not only has the mainstream gone gay—remember the quaintly controversial IKEA commercial featuring two thoroughly domesticated gay men picking out items for their home?—but gay life has gone mainstream. The course of this change can be seen in Hollywood movies. It was just a few years ago that the gay hit *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, a bawdy and occasionally hilarious movie from Australia, inspired a mediocre American imitation starring tough-guys Wesley Snipes and Patrick Swayze—hairless men both. In 1997's *My Best Friend's Wedding*, Julia Roberts's gay pal, who is her cover date for the wedding, seems to be the only character capable of romance; a faux-heterosexual tic has him stealing all the scenes he is in. Amidst so many public displays of friendship to support the comedy's bland premise (the possibility of good friends' getting married) the gay character refreshes the movie by leading the rehearsal dinner in a round of "I Say a Little Prayer." It's a weird throwback moment in which the movie's greatest display of devotion—a scene that could have been stolen from an old Gene Kelly musical—is romantically meaningless. It's also a reflection of the question at the center of the movie: Is love just an intense form of friendship?

Well, yes, according to various pop-culture trends of the '90s. The super-successful girl pop band the Spice Girls were practically a propaganda squad

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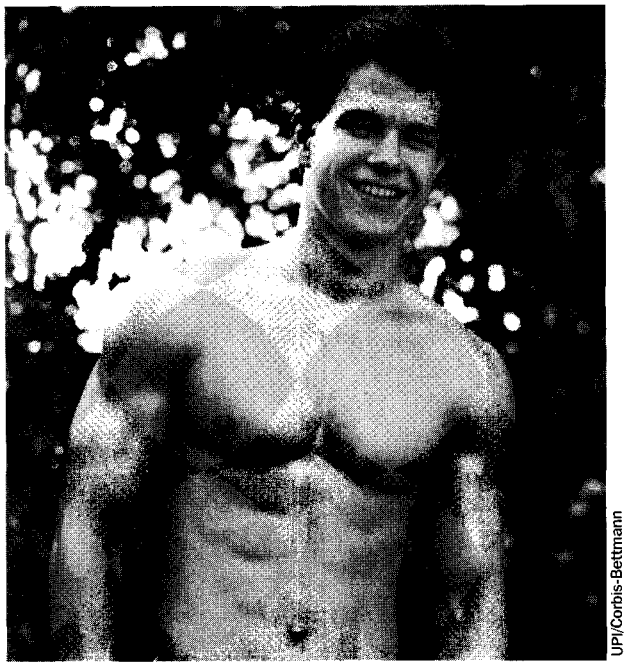

UPI/Corbis-Bettmann

Mark Wahlberg: the post-macho hairless man

detached by the friends of friendship to demote eros to the status of a lower passion. Two of the most popular sitcoms of the decade *Seinfeld* and *Friends* were both predicated on the elevation of platonic love, one cynically and the other in a way that was painfully cute. Ross from *Friends*, the show's one regular male character of serious romantic intent, doesn't even merit being called a SNAG. His whiny boyish mannerisms suggest he can barely live up to the guy part. Men who really do love women have been, if not written out of television and Hollywood, playing second fiddle to their emasculated brothers.

In her famous 1964 essay "Notes on Camp," Susan Sontag, the voice of New York's then cultural vanguard, felt compelled to explain the obvious overlap between the self-consciously theatrical style described in her essay and homosexual taste, which, she wrote, constitutes "the vanguard of camp": "The camp insistence on not being 'serious,' on playing, also connects with the homosexual's desire to remain youthful." In September 1996, *New York* magazine published a prescient article describing the decline of the other defining characteristic of gay life: militancy. Referring to the "'Hallmarkization' of gay sensibility," the author, Daniel Mendelsohn, argued, "If you take away the edge and the kitsch, there's not much left—and what remains isn't all that different from what you find in straight culture."

This seems to already overstate the difference between the sometimes campy and sometimes edgy singles culture of gays and the less campy and less edgy singles culture of straights. Traditionally, big cities are magnets for both gays and young people who are looking for careers first and spouses later. In places like New York, the romantic lives of a young straight and a young gay—both divisible into units of temporary attachments—aren't really that different. The difference between young married people and young unmarried people is far greater. If an icon of gay sexuality like the hairless male has gone mainstream over the last decade, it is because mainstream America wasn't intrinsically hostile to gay visibility to begin with.

What has been lost as the hairless man, an eternal boy, has become our male ideal? Real romance, for one significant thing. The hairless man is perhaps searching for romance, but only insofar as it supplies self-fulfillment and steers him clear of the burdens of love and family. Which is a pity. In order for real romance to occur, there must be some connection with matrimony. The hairless man would have to be robbed of his adolescent affectations and forced to mature. Defenders of a traditional culture have been overly fixated on gay characters, openly gay actors, and gay love stories. Such entertainment will succeed or fail on its merits as entertainment. Yet, it is the embarrassment of heterosexual love that should concern us.

Manliness cannot, after all, be reduced to a hard body, high income, and regular exercise. And yet, a pretty boy, the hairless man, has become the signature of American romance, thus mistaking the acorn for the tree, potential for the final product, leaving us with too many suitors and too few fathers, and stories about sex and love that never end in marriage and family. The problem, to paraphrase C. S. Lewis, is that we cannot raise geldings and expect them to be fruitful. We cannot turn middle-aged men back into boys and expect them to be leaders, elders, the carriers of what wisdom that comes with age. We cannot erase general notions of manliness from popular culture and expect today's boys to be tomorrow's protectors and providers. Where can one find reflections of manliness, if everywhere you turn, the American male seems boyish, hairless, shorn of any sign that he is an adult? ♦

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"Kill the Bill, Not the Ill"

A Report from the Front Lines of the Assisted-Suicide Fight in California

By Wesley J. Smith

Sacramento, California

It was every liberal's dream of diverse, grass-roots political activism: more than a hundred people demonstrating angrily in front of the California state capitol against pending legislation that threatened people who are poor, who are disabled, and who are vulnerable. Disability-rights activists in wheelchairs marched in solidarity with white medical professionals, alongside African-American clergy and advocates for the poor, next to Latino migrant farm workers and Catholics praying the rosary.

Some liberals, however, were displeased by this show of diversity. For Democratic assemblywomen Dion Aroner of Berkeley and Sheila Kuehl of Santa Monica, for example, the protest was only the latest frustration. Aroner is the author of AB 1592, a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide, and Kuehl is a leading supporter. Conventional wisdom had held that the bill would move swiftly and easily through the committee process and onto the assembly floor for quick approval. But the grass-roots coalition that had sprung up to oppose it had slowed the bill's progress to a crawl.

IN CALIFORNIA, THE OPPONENTS OF ASSISTED SUICIDE "LOOK LIKE AMERICA" —RICH AND POOR, WELL AND DISABLED, BLACK AND WHITE AND LATINO.

In contrast with the monochrome proponents of assisted suicide—all "white, well-off, well, and worried," as disability-rights activist Diane Coleman puts it—the opponents "look like America." For hours, they demonstrated on the sidewalk, walking in a circle and chanting robustly:

Kill the bill, not the ill!
We won't take your deadly pill!

This is what we're going to do:
Kill AB 1592!

One in four in this state are poor,
Medical care has closed its doors:
All of us want to stay alive!
We don't want your suicide!
One, two, three four,
Death-squad medicine will kill the poor:
Five, six, seven, eight,
Stop 1592 before it's too late!

California has always been the prize most avidly sought by assisted-suicide advocates. The first modern attempt to legalize euthanasia in this country was mounted in California in 1988, when proponents gathered signatures for an initiative. That effort fell short, but the proponents were able to place Proposition 161 on the ballot for the November 1992 election. Although the early polls put it ahead with more than 70 percent support, California voters nixed the euthanasia and assisted-suicide measure by 54 percent to 46 percent. Now, with rich philanthropists such as George Soros and foundations like the Gerbode Foundation of San Francisco behind the effort, and with the governor's mansion and legislature in Democratic hands, advocates sensed the time was ripe to strike and win.

First stop for AB 1592 was the Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sheila Kuehl. The committee was weighted heavily in favor of passage, with nine Democrats, five Republicans, and the newly elected Green party assemblywoman from Oakland, Audie Bock, whose first big vote would be about 1592.

On the day the measure was heard, April 20, 1999, more than 50 opponents crowded the committee

Wesley J. Smith is an attorney for the International Anti-Euthanasia Task Force. His forthcoming book is Culture of Death: The Destruction of Medical Ethics in America.

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room, alongside fewer than 10 supporters. One would have thought that a proposal as momentous as permitting doctors to facilitate the intentional deaths of their patients would require a deep exploration of the pros and cons. Kuehl didn't see matters this way. She permitted only brief testimony from two witnesses on each side. Supporters pushed the "choice" button. Opponents brought up objections often overlooked in media accounts of the assisted-suicide debate. For example, an assisted suicide costs only $35, while proper treatment for the same patient might cost $35,000. In the era of managed care, the financial force of gravity is obvious. The threat assisted suicide poses to disabled people was also stressed. Professor Paul Longmore, a nationally recognized disability-rights activist who teaches history at San Francisco State University, testified that "fear of disability underlies assisted suicide," noting that "a dozen major disability-rights organizations strongly oppose it."

What were liberals to do? They despise HMOs and vilify them often. Yet, opponents label AB 1592 the "HMO Profit Protection Act." Liberals claim to care deeply about protecting people with disabilities, but the disability-rights community was out in force protesting the bill.

CASTING WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS THE "MOMMY VOTE," THE GREEN PARTY MEMBER TURNED YELLOW: AUDIE BOCK SWITCHED HER VOTE TO "YES."

An initial vote was taken: ayes 7, noes 8. It looked like AB 1592 was history. But wait. Kuehl and Aroner closed in on the weak link in the opposition chain, Audie Bock, who had voted "no" on account of her worries about HMO abuses. Shaken by the intensity of Aroner's and Kuehl's pressure, Bock called her mother to ask how she should vote. Casting what became known derisively as "the mommy vote," the Green party member turned yellow: Bock switched her vote to "yes" on the basis of her mother's support of assisted suicide and Aroner's blithe assurance that her HMO concerns would be addressed in amendments.

Disappointed opponents wasted little time grousing about Bock's weakness. They set to work lobbying members of the Appropriations Committee, chaired by the powerful San Francisco Democrat Carole Migden, who is closely allied with Aroner and Kuehl. The hearing in Appropriations was held on May 19. As at the Judiciary Committee hearing, opponents filled the committee room; this time more than 100 strong, they overflowed into an upstairs balcony. Once again, testimony was restricted to two brief presentations from each side. Opponents loudly applauded major points made in opposition. Kuehl groused to Migden that she had not allowed opponents to applaud when she had chaired the Judiciary Committee hearing. Then an African American stepped forward, angrily declaring, "I demand to be heard! I demand to be heard! This bill will harm my community!"

The eyes of the liberals on the committee widened and their jaws dropped. An uncomfortable silence fell. This kind of thing is only supposed to happen to conservatives.

Migden allowed the man to testify along with the other witnesses, then announced quickly that the bill was "in suspense." The vote would not be held for another week.

If the bill's supporters expected the opponents to go away, they were in for a big surprise. During the ensuing week, advocates for the poor mounted a vigil. They scoured the capitol hallways looking for legislators to pigeonhole. Meanwhile, professional lobbyists hired by other members of the anti-1592 coalition, such as the California Hospice Association, kept up the pressure. Informal counts of the committee showed AB 1592 losing 11-10.

The vote was scheduled for May 26. Once again, opponents filled the committee room. Lacking the votes to get 1592 out of committee, the chair delayed the vote until the next day. But this time, no advance schedule would be posted announcing the committee meeting. AB 1592 would be heard in the Appropriations Committee "off the floor"—that is, on very short notice after the day's full assembly session. Opponents were forced to attend the entire session just to learn when and where the committee would meet.

When this was finally announced, about 35 opponents filled a small hallway adjacent to the committee room. No vote was held. Then, at about 3:20 P.M., Carole Migden accompanied by 1592 opponent George Runner, a Republican, came out to speak to the opponents. Penny Montemayor, a member of the Coalition

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of Concerned Medical Professionals, was there. According to Montemayor, Migden said, "There will be no vote on AB 1592 today. You can all go home. It might be tomorrow." Relying on Migden's word, opponents left the building.

They shouldn't have been so trusting. Migden was not telling the truth. Shortly after the opponents departed, Migden called AB 1592 before the committee for a vote. Runner says he was "surprised that the measure was taken up in light of the fact that the Chair [Migden had] told opponents that we would not be taking up the bill." He objected, to no avail.

The measure still should have lost. However, the California assembly is profoundly undemocratic. Unbeknownst to most Californians, special rules created by former speaker Willie Brown permit the speaker of the assembly to mix and match committee members almost at will to secure desired results on different bills. Thus, a committee that meets on Tuesday to vote on one set of bills may not consist of the same members when the committee meets on Wednesday to take up different proposals. This ability to play political musical chairs gives the speaker tremendous power. If he wants a bill to pass through the committees, it passes through the committees.

Kevin Chadwick

Assembly speaker Antonio Villaraigosa has not announced his actual position on assisted suicide or AB 1592. However, it is known that as a matter of political comity, he promised Aroner that her pet proposal would reach the assembly floor. In order to accomplish this, at the last minute he was forced to substitute two "yes" votes in the Appropriations Committee for two of the previously announced "no" votes. With opponents misled and the committee membership manipulated undemocratically, AB 1592 passed out of the Appropriations Committee by a vote of 11-9 and limped onto the assembly floor.

That night, Aroner crowed disingenuously to the *Oakland Tribune* that the Appropriations and Judiciary Committees votes in favor of 1592 had demonstrated the "strength" of her measure. But even she had to acknowledge that any chance of moving it through the assembly and into the senate was gone. Realizing she did not have the 40 votes needed to pass the measure, Aroner put her bill on the inactive list. It cannot be brought up again until January.

So now the fight is on for the hearts and minds of the California assembly. It is democracy versus political maneuvering, grass roots versus establishment politicians, constituency activism versus capitol horse-trading. Bad news for Aroner: The grass roots are angry. They did not appreciate Bock's being pressured to change her vote. They are even angrier at being lied to about the pending Appropriations Committee vote. They are especially bitter about the switch of committee members that made a sham of their participation.

Proponents of AB 1592 claimed they wanted an open, democratic debate on one of the most controversial issues facing the country. But they didn't act like it. What they actually sought was to push assisted suicide quickly through the assembly before anyone knew what was happening. Instead, they underestimated the power of bad public policy and underhanded political tactics to unify and motivate strange political bedfellows. Now, the opponents' determination is palpable:

Thirty-five dollars is all it costs,
To write us off as a total loss:
For thirty-five bucks the state could pay
For the poor and sick to go away:
Thirty-five dollars—that's so cold
For suicide when you get old. ♦

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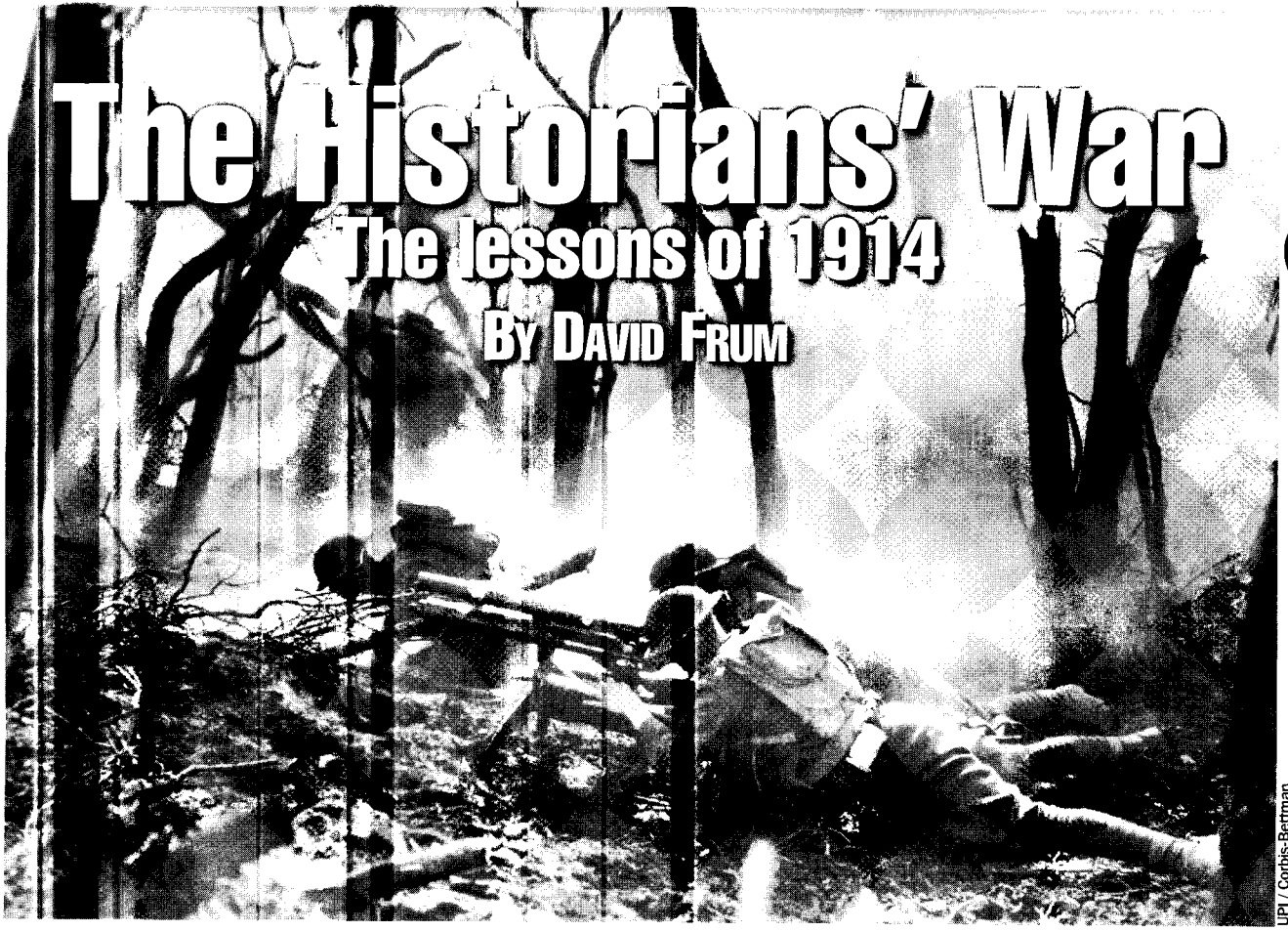
The Historians' War

The lessons of 1914

By David Frum



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In the final eleven years of the twentieth century, time seems to have run backwards. The Red Army withdrew from central Europe, rescinding 1945. A dictatorship fell in Berlin, undoing 1933. Statues of Lenin toppled across Russia, annulling 1917. War in the Balkans was the first horror we passed on our way into the century, and it is the final horror we are passing on our way out. After nine blood-soaked decades, Europe has at last laboriously reestablished a continent-wide order nearly as enlightened, decent, and free as the one that prevailed in July 1914.

Only if we decide what lessons to learn from the First World War are we right to hope that the awfulness of the past century forms merely a detour and not an eternally recurring pattern in European history, for that war and its consequences can never really be left behind. And here—in time for the eighty-fifth anniversary of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the eightieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, both on June 28—are two of the most important books in many years about the war and its aftermath.

In *The First World War*, the magisterial English military historian John Keegan—author of such classics as 1976's *The Face of Battle*—writes of the war precisely as a *war*: uniquely horrible, but still intelligible in the same way that the Napoleonic Wars and the Second World War are intelligible. In *The Pity of War*, the younger Scottish historian Niall Ferguson instead presents the war as a catastrophic caesura in world history, a calamity whose strategic and tactical aspects are perhaps the least interesting thing about it.

JOHN KEEGAN
The First World War
Knopf, 453 pp., $35

NIALL FERGUSON
The Pity of War
Basic Books, 563 pp., $30

World War I began—as we have had cause to be frequently reminded in recent months—in a quarrel between Serbia and the Habsburgs' Austro-Hungarian Empire over Bosnia. Austria had it; Serbia wanted it. When the heir to the Habsburg throne announced he would visit Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, in June 1914, five young Bosnian Serbs decided to murder him.

The fatal shots were fired on the intermittently famous anniversary of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo. By torturing the plotters, the Austrians quickly discovered the involvement of the Serbian military, if not the government of Serbia, in the assassination. The Austrian government presented Serbia with a stiff set of punitive demands, while the Austrian army drew up invasion plans.

Had the Austrians struck immediately, there would probably have been no wider war: Everyone in Europe more or less agreed that the Serbs deserved what was coming to them. But the Austrians hesitated for four weeks, during which the great powers of Europe became convinced their interests were implicated in the Serbian-Austrian confrontation.

Russia supported Serbia for fear that Austria would extend its empire deeper

David Frum is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD. *His previous essay on World War I, "1917 and All That," appeared in the April 28, 1997 issue.*

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Photos: Basic Books

Left: Royal artillerymen pose with shells marked to revenge a British naval captain executed by the Germans. Right: The "mountains" of Allied supplies that discouraged the German soldiers at the war's end. Opposite page: A German soldier in a British prisoner-of-war camp.

into the Balkans. Germany backed Austria for fear that its only friend in Europe would otherwise lose a war to Russia. France joined Russia for fear that Germany and Austria would defeat its main ally. On August 1, Germany, Austria, France, and Russia all mobilized. On August 4, German troops entered Belgium, and Britain entered the war against Germany and Austria. The Ottoman Empire declared war in November 1914, and Italy in May 1915. Montenegro, Japan, Romania, Greece, and Portugal would join the Allied side; Bulgaria the German. The United States tried for three years to preserve its neutrality, but was at last drawn in as well, declaring war on Germany in April 1917.

By the time it had come to an end, 578,000 Italian soldiers were dead, 800,000 Ottomans, 920,000 from the British Empire, 1.1 million from the Habsburg domains, 1.4 million Frenchmen, 1.8 million Russians, and 2 million Germans. Some 15 million men were wounded, almost half of them maimed for life. At least 8 million civilians died violently or from starvation; millions more perished in the 1918-19 influenza epidemic exacerbated by the destruction of the war. In *The First World War*, John Keegan puts it starkly: More than one out of every three German boys aged nineteen to twenty-two at the outbreak of the war was killed from 1914 to 1918.

In those four and a half years of the First World War lie the causes of the Second. And that second great war, by drawing Soviet soldiers into the heart of Europe, engendered in turn the Cold War—which would not end until the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, seventy-one years to the day after Kaiser Wilhelm's abdication.

None of this is ever far from European minds. But for Americans, World War I looms a much smaller memory than World War II or the Civil War. Sergeant York aside, the First World War threw up few American heroes. It did not stir the profound emotions of the Civil War or the Revolution, and it lacked the moral clarity of World War II. Above all, most of the fighting was done by foreigners: America lost 114,000 men in the war, not even half as many as Romania.

As a result, the history of the First World War is a topic that Americans have tended to leave to British writers. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that. But the disproportion between America's sacrifices and Britain's (and the shabby way that the United States treated Britain after 1918) means that it takes a very fair-minded British writer to do justice to America's contribution to winning the war.

Likewise, because British wealth and power never recovered from the war, British historians are understandably tempted to wish that their country had never joined it and to write about the war in a spirit of regret over "what might have been." And from John Maynard Keynes to A.J.P. Taylor, that spirit of regret has all too often drifted into actual apologetics for Germany.

John Keegan's elegant new book, however, avoids both dangers. Keegan is a lecturer at the British military academy, Sandhurst, and the military affairs correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*. His father, his father-in-law, and two of his uncles served in the British armies, and with *The Face of Battle*, he produced what is universally acclaimed one of the best accounts ever written of the actual experience of combat.

In *The First World War*, Keegan candidly acknowledges the amateurishness of the American soldiers (except for the Marines) and the defects of American tactics: General John Pershing refused to believe he could learn anything from the stuck-up Frogs and Limeys, and he ordered lines of doughboys to charge German machine guns in frontal assaults

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reminiscent of the worst slaughters of the early months of the war.

But Keegan also stresses the extent to which the United States was absolutely crucial to Allied victory. The last great German offensive, in the spring of 1918, penetrated deep into the British military zone—where the ill-fed, badly shod German troops got a look at the Allies' colossal mountains of food, clothing, boots, and ammunition. And when the offensive sputtered out, the Germans began their long retreat knowing that 250,000 Americans a month were landing in France—more reinforcements than Germany could expect in an entire year—and that four million more were in training in the United States, a force larger than the entire remaining German army.

"The consequent sense of the pointlessness of further effort rotted the resolution of the German soldier to do his duty," Keegan says. The German army in November 1918 was still intact and in occupation of foreign soil. The Allies expected at least another year of fighting. But the Germans' nerve was smashed, and had the Armistice not been sought when it was, the Kaiser's army might well have simply dissolved.

As Keegan sees it, much of the horror of the First World War was an appalling accident of timing. By 1914, the killing technologies of the twentieth century—the machine gun, the high explosive shell, the grenade—were all available. But the technologies that could coordinate them purposefully—the field radio, the tank, the airplane—were still to come. So were the lifesaving technologies that reduced casualties in the West during World War II: blood transfusions, antibiotics, and perhaps most important, trucks that could move the wounded rapidly to a field hospital.

Keegan does not make excuses for Douglas Haig and the other bloodsoaked butchers of the high command; as Prime Minister Lloyd George savagely quipped: "The solicitude with which most generals in high places (there were honorable exceptions) avoided personal jeopardy is one of the debatable novelties of modern warfare." But Keegan convincingly argues that one reason World War I cast up no military men like World War II's Montgomery and Patton is that 1914 offered no possibility for them.

Keegan thus resists the temptation (succumbed to by the author of one of the early classic histories of the war, Basil H. Liddell Hart) to condemn Allied generals as idiots while leaving the impression that the German generals were a collection of Erwin Rommels. In fact, if any high command was criminally irresponsible, it was Germany's. The famous Schlieffen plan was, Keegan insists, doomed from the start. Once they reached the French border, the truckless German troops would have to get off

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their trains and walk. On the narrow roads of those days, a single army corps extended almost twenty miles. The great constraint on striking power in 1914 was not manpower but road surface. Keegan argues that there simply was not room on the paved roads of northern France for an army the size that von Schlieffen's plan required, and he identifies despairing hints in the text of the plan that suggest von Schlieffen himself knew it. The Germans proceeded anyway.

If "brilliance" is coming up with an idea that nobody ever thought to say before, then we pay undue honor to intellectual flash when we make brilliance the touchstone of excellence—since the most common reason that nobody has thought to say a particular thing is that the thing is wrong. In this sense, John Keegan's *The First World War* is the opposite of brilliant: It is instead lucid, impartial, and authoritative. Most impressively, it is a miracle of concision, compressing problems that have consumed entire books into two or three crystalline paragraphs. And in the same understated style as the British Imperial war cemeteries in France, it is quietly heart-rending.

"Brilliant," however, is exactly the word to describe Niall Ferguson's *The Pity of War*. Ferguson has produced a dazzlingly ambitious attempt to write not a narrative history, but a debunking of what he bills as ten "broadly held myths" about the war.

On examination, his broadly held myths usually turn out to be either not broadly held or not myths. When, for example, Ferguson attacks the notion that Germany went to war in 1914 because it felt strong, he's attacking something believed by almost nobody. The brave counter-position Ferguson claims as his own—that Germany went to war because its leaders felt weak and feared that Russian industrialization would leave them weaker still—is held by almost all modern historians.

But Ferguson's overhyping of his originality does not entirely diminish his achievement. *The Pity of War* is a fascinating volume, bristling with interesting ideas. Ferguson approaches the war from an unusual angle. He is a financial historian (his previous book was a history of the house of Rothschild), and he never loses sight of the truth that paying for the war was an absolute precondition for fighting it. The First World War was the most expensive thing the human race had ever until then done. It cost about $180 billion in the money of the day (at a time when $1 bought one-twentieth of an ounce of gold, or fifteen times as much as today), and that's not counting the reconstruction of northern France and southern Belgium or the postwar cost of caring for the crippled and the orphaned.

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Basic Books; Knopf

Left: A German corpse. Right: Tyne Cot Cemetery, Passchendaele, holding 12,000 and commemorating the 35,000 who were never found.

Cost was the crucial variable of the war. One of the enduring mysteries of the war is how Germany managed to survive as long as it did when its enemies so outnumbered it. It's true that the Germans were better fighters: "From August 1914 until June 1918," Ferguson observes, "there was *not a single month* in which the Germans failed to kill or capture" more soldiers on the Western front than they lost. But this alone would not have sufficed, given the Allies' overwhelming economic advantage. The key, Ferguson determines, was Germany's superior management of its military resources. He grimly calculates that "whereas it cost the Entente powers $33,485.48 to kill a serviceman fighting for the Central Powers, it cost the Central Powers just $11,344.77 to kill a serviceman fighting for the Entente." It was this three-to-one disparity in killing efficiency that kept Germany in the fight for four and a half years.

This same close attention to numbers leads Ferguson into some of his most ingenious but least convincing suggestions. He argues that Germany did not emerge from the war economically broken: Its internal war debt and its external reparations debt amounted to 160 percent of its gross domestic product in 1921, less than Britain's (165 percent) and substantially less than Britain's after the 1815 defeat of Napoleon (which Ferguson believes to have been close to 200 percent).

Ferguson argues that Germany could thus have afforded to honor its debt and pay as well its reparations to the Allies. The Young Plan of 1929 envisaged a payout of about 3 percent of German national income a year for sixty years—a not unimaginable stretch of time when one considers that modern Germany has been, as Ferguson notes, a net contributor to the European Union budget for forty years now. Three percent of national income is substantial, but hardly crushing: It's roughly equivalent to America's post-Cold War defense budget.

What Ferguson neglects to mention, however, is the reason that Germany's debt was as low as 160 percent. By 1921—two years before the famous German hyperinflation of the 1920s began—Germany had already inflated away most of its internal debt. Britain financed the war by dissolving its overseas investments; Germany financed the war by expropriating the savings of its middle class.

The country that Ferguson envisages paying reparations was thus not a stable, prosperous Germany, quietly accumulating trade surpluses in a free trade world; it may have been spared the terrible physical damage inflicted on France and Belgium, but it was teetering politically, locked out of world markets by discriminatory tariffs, and convulsed economically.

Ferguson is right that Germany should have been made to help rebuild France and Belgium. But it was not mere truculence that caused Germany to default. Britain and America—the winners of the war—had already defaulted on their obligation to build an international economic order in which there was room for Germany to earn the money to pay France and Belgium. In the end, the United States ended up lending Germany the money, which only made the already ramshackle financial structure of the 1920s more rickety still.

Ferguson's *The Pity of War* has attracted attention most of all for its argument that Britain ought to have stayed out of the First World War. This is the section of his work excerpted in the *Atlantic Monthly* and the argument that inspired the *New Yorker* to publish a lengthy article about him. Ferguson contends that Britain was not bound to come to the aid of France and Belgium in August 1914. True, France would have lost had Britain not. But so what?

> Had Britain stood aside—even for a matter of weeks—continental Europe could therefore have been transformed into something not wholly unlike the European Union we know today—but without the massive contraction in British overseas power entailed by the fighting of two world wars. . . . It would have been infinitely preferable if Germany could have achieved its hegemonic position on the continent without two world wars. . . . By fighting Germany in 1914, Asquith, Grey and their colleagues helped ensure that, when Germany did finally achieve predominance on the continent, Britain was no longer strong enough to provide a check on it.

But what grounds do we actually have to believe that the sort of rule a victorious Germany would have fastened on the continent would look like the European Union? In 1967, the leading scholar of the subject, Fritz Fischer, offered impressive documentary evidence that the German war aims of World War I

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bore an uncanny resemblance to the German war aims of World War II: a continent-wide system of economic exploitation.

Ferguson dismisses Fischer's work, but—in curious contrast to the painstaking care of most of the rest of the book—at this all-important juncture he substitutes unsubstantiated assertion for proof. Fischer, Ferguson says, was talking about Germany's aims in 1916. Had Germany won the war in 1915, its aims would have been less radical. Perhaps that's true, although Ferguson offers no evidence for it. But even moderate aims would have been bad enough: economic and military control of Europe from Spain to Poland by an illiberal, militarized regime.

Such a Europe would in no way resemble the modern European Union, a confederacy of democracies in which Germany happens to be the richest. A German victory would instead have ushered in a premature Cold War between two world powers, the United States and a German-ruled continent of Europe, only with the ships and armies of the illiberal great power based on the south shore of the English Channel. Under those circumstances, Britain would have ceased to be a great power just as rapidly as it did in actual fact.

If Ferguson wanted to argue a radical position, he might have tried this one: Britain did not decline because of the First World War. Had Britain in 1919 been what it was in 1859—the world's most productive economy—all the foreign assets spent to win the war would speedily have been replaced. Ferguson ought to have thought harder about the implications of his observation that Britain spent relatively more to defeat Napoleon than it did to beat the Kaiser—but that Britain nevertheless dominated the nineteenth century economically; harder too about the observation, which he does not make, that Britain spent only slightly more to defeat the Kaiser than the United States spent to win World War II—an expenditure that did not prevent the United States from dominating the twentieth. The war weakened Britain because it deprived her of the accumulated wealth that would otherwise have cushioned her decline. But war or no war, she was declining, because of the failure of her economy to continue to lead.

The causes of this failure are much debated. Probably the best explanation is the unique strength of British trade unions, which had already by 1900 loaded onto British industry the most restrictive business practices in the developed world. But whatever the explanation, it does suggest that the right might-have-been for Britain is, "How could we have maintained our economic edge?" and not "How could we have accommodated ourselves to the Kaiser?"

There's a lesson in this for America. A country, no matter how rich, ceases to be great when it loses the heart to protect itself in a world of dangerous states. There are plenty of examples, of which the eighteenth-century Netherlands is the most familiar. The technical term for such countries is "prey." That's what Britain would have been had Germany prevailed in the First World War. That's what the United States will be on the day its readiness to defend itself falters. ♦

WRITER'S BLOCK

Barry Unsworth's novel examines the unexamined life

By Norah Vincent

The name of the British novelist Barry Unsworth rings only a vague bell for American readers. But it should ring louder. He won England's Booker Prize in 1992 for *Sacred Hunger*, a work of fiction that deserved high literary honors. And his 1988 *Sugar and Rum*, which has just been published here in the United States, proves equally compelling.

BARRY UNSWORTH
Sugar and Rum
Norton, 256 pp., $13

Sugar and Rum is an intensely revelatory, semi-autobiographical novel—which hardly sounds like a recommendation, given the confessional goo so often bottled as literature these days. And it is as well something of an untidy book: Hardly any plot, for example, manages to appear except in the observations and memories of Benson, the story's world-weary protagonist.

But it is in its language that *Sugar and Rum* succeeds where other books fail, and in its ability to conjure up inner life—reminding the reader that at their best, words can bridge the gap between the mind and the world outside it. Benson is a man made of soulful injuries, most of them incurred while serving in the British army late in the Second World War. At sixty-three, he is an established writer residing in Liverpool, working on a novel about the Atlantic slave trade (the subject of Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger*).

But Benson is stalled in his work, having fallen into a stubborn bout of writer's block. So, instead of writing, he wanders the streets of his dismal city looking for portents and signs, shreds of meaning in everyday life that might wake him from his creative torpor. For extra money, which he rarely if ever collects from his impecunious clients, he coaches abysmally bad closet poets and avocational writers in his spare time.

Unsurprisingly, his "Fictioneers," as he calls them, have the undesired effect of driving him more deeply into the existential despair from which he is so intent on freeing himself. Yet, through it all, Benson keeps his delightfully wry sense of humor, and displays it to us at all the right moments. His is an oddly warm and substantive sort of nausea—the kind

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from which a serious Jack Lemmon character might suffer. There is, of course, real suffering going on, but morose, navel-gazing godlessness is not the theme in *Sugar and Rum*. Something tangible and sustaining is at the bottom of Benson's well.

The novel opens with Benson making his usual rounds one afternoon on the city streets, when he notices what looks like a carpet falling from the rooftop of a block of flats. When the carpet hits the ground "with a sound a carpet wouldn't have made," Benson sees that the airborne object was a man, a suicide, who is now lying dead in the street in front of him. Benson responds with characteristic thoughtfulness and awkward personability. Regarding a passing motorist who was, like Benson, startled by the leap and has stopped to see if he can help, Benson reaches out, only to touch the stolid wall of a stranger's impassivity:

> He looked into the man's eyes, sad and moist and shifty under the mildly reeking brim of his hat, and felt for a sharp moment an impulse to embrace him. Instead he made a gift of words, presented a fragment of his experience. "I thought it was a carpet, at first," he said, "you know, from the way he fell." He would have liked to enlarge on this, now that the need of action was over, to commemorate this death with at least a few minutes of conversation. But the motorist had already turned away.

Benson has many such encounters with strangers on the street and even comes near to being pummeled senseless by a gang of street thugs when he tries to engage them in one of his searching, metaphorical conversations. Then, late one evening, Benson encounters a bedraggled street urchin singing for change in the street. By the distinctive red birthmark on his face, Benson recognizes him as Thompson, one of his fellow infantrymen in the war.

Determined to make some retrospective sense of his haunting memories, Benson buys a bottle of scotch and follows Thompson home to his ramshackle abode in one of Liverpool's worst slums. But, much to Benson's chagrin, when he knocks on his door and introduces himself, Thompson doesn't seem to know who he is, but invites Benson in anyway.

As they share the whiskey, Benson realizes that Thompson is too far gone to make any real sense of their shared experiences in the war. Here Unsworth's powers of observation, and his ability to capture the pathos of the moment assert themselves:

> Perception is a leaping thing and the gatherings of the leap are always obscure. It seemed now to Benson that he had heard death in that palsied singing, that he had sensed it while he followed Thompson's slow steps back here to his lair, that the knowledge had informed the memories of these recent days and nights. . . . The eyes that looked at Benson were bemused and fierce, eyes of an animal unable to understand its own ruin. . . . Nothing was sure on his face except the imminence of its dissolution; this larger truth swamped the piecemeal operation of memory.

Benson goes on to meet another war buddy, Slater, who lives near the city in a lavish mansion. His hopes for some companionable sense of loss, or the soothing effect of shared recollections from combat, are dashed here as well. Slater, like Thompson, simply thinks their war experiences happened too long ago to merit remembering.

But, unlike Thompson, who is so clearly a man defeated by experience, Slater coasts mindlessly over the surface of his bourgeois existence, as far removed from the brutal lessons of war as a modern teenager who's never known adversity—or so it seems to Benson.

From here, the novel meanders slowly to its conclusion, and that conclusion arrives as a non sequitur, offering little in the way of resolution. It's difficult in the end to know whether Thompson's dullard lethargy or Slater's hermetic obliviousness is more alienating, just as it's difficult to decide which is the more horrifying example of the unexamined life.

But that, of course, is Unsworth's point, and it's what makes *Sugar and Rum* a novel worth reading. ♦

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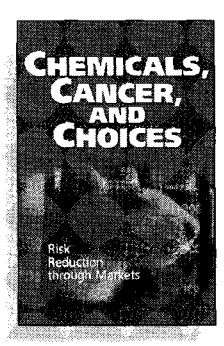

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Top Hat

Fred Astaire's Aristocratic Democracy

By S.T. Karnick

Fred Astaire—classy, charming, elegant—was born one hundred years ago this spring, and by the time of his death in 1987, he had become one of the most vivid cultural images of the century.

His character in the 1935 *Top Hat* is typical: The debonair young Jerry Travers, cane in hand, shimmers onto the screen in top hat, white tie, and tails, to dance and sing, "I'm steppin' out, my dear, / to breathe an atmosphere / that simply reeks of class," while a line of supporting dancers in evening clothes becomes a shooting gallery for his pantomime with the cane.

Astaire's insouciance, grace, and command of his environment are all right there. But one could pick any of dozens of other moments in his films: singing "'S Wonderful" on a raft with Audrey Hepburn in *Funny Face*, dancing up to Heaven with Vera-Ellen in *Belle of New York*, singing "Puttin' on the Ritz" in morning coat, ascot, and spats in *Blue Skies*, or performing "The Continental," "The Piccolino," "Cheek to Cheek," and "Easter Parade."

Astaire's movies revel in the splendid Art Deco designs of Van Nest Polglase and the surface elegance that wealth can bring: fine hotels, fancy nightclubs, cruise ships, golf courses, sculpted gardens, women in glittering gowns, and men in evening dress. Even the servants dress better than most modern Americans. The grooming and hairstyles are perfect. The songs scintillate, composed by George and Ira Gershwin, Rodgers and Hart, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Comden and Green. The dances are exquisitely choreographed by Astaire and Hermes Pan and executed by Astaire and his brilliant partners. And the women are thoroughly appealing: spunky Ginger Rogers, sultry Rita Hayworth, elegant Irene Dunne, wholesome Vera-Ellen; even Joan Fontaine seems almost charming beside him in *A Damsel in Distress*. Everything in his films, especially the early ones, is right and lovely, with a feeling of lightness and freedom.

But Astaire's appeal was not constrained by the songs or the settings. He was just as winsome performing "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" with Ginger Rogers on roller skates, singing and dancing in a ship's boiler room in *Shall We Dance?*, driving a hansom cab in *Top Hat*, rocketing through a penny arcade in *The Band Wagon*, and dancing in a fake beard in a beatnik bar in *Funny Face*. He's equally charming portraying a Mickey Spillane-style detective in *The Band Wagon*'s "Girl Hunt" ballet, dancing on the walls and ceiling of a drab hotel room in *Royal Wedding*, performing "A Couple of Swells" as a seedy tramp with Judy Garland in *Easter Parade*, arguing with Ginger Rogers in Central Park in *Shall We Dance?*, or even punching Ginger in the eye (for her own good, of course) in *Carefree*.

It's impossible to watch Fred Astaire without longing to possess his appeal, his elegance, and his class. And, at the same time, it's impossible to watch Fred Astaire without almost believing that you *can* possess them—that you too could be Astairian. From the beginning, critics were aware of his charm but completely unable to identify its source. Alexander Woolcott characterized him as "incredibly nimble and lackadaisical" and "one of these extraordinary persons whose senses of rhythm and humor have been all mixed up, whose very muscles, of which he seems to have an extra supply, are downright facetious." Walter Winchell dismissed him as "personable and talented." To this day, few seem able to mention Astaire's dancing without using words like "effortless." Arlene Croce, in the 1972 *Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers Book*, concludes: "Everything comes easy to him."

Certainly the critics were quite aware that Astaire's apparent effortlessness was the result of much hard work and his celebrated blitheness the product of extraordinary self-control and craftsmanship. But the form their praise took indicates the extent to which even they believed in the ease and effortlessness of his on-screen persona.

This is the paradox of Fred Astaire: He never seemed more accessible than when he was sophisticated; he never seemed more democratic than when he was aristocratic. Even while that slim dancer—with his slightly too-short fig-

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ure, slightly too-large head, and slightly too-sad eyes—was teaching the anti-egalitarian lesson that the wealthy and the cultured are absolutely right about the superiority of their beautiful and elegant lives, he was also teaching the profoundly egalitarian lesson that *anyone can have it*. Beauty and elegance, grace and charm, are just a matter of having the right attitude and being light on your feet: The undiscovered Audrey Hepburn is waiting behind the counter in the bookstore down the street, the down-to-earth Ginger Rogers is looking for a seat on the next train, the upper-crust Irene Dunne is just around the corner with something in her eye and needs to borrow a handkerchief.

Fred Astaire was born Frederick Austerlitz in a clapboard house in Omaha, Nebraska, in May 1899. His sister, Adele, born two years earlier, was a prodigy of singing and dancing, and Astaire's parents, Frederic and Johanna, invested much of their hard-earned money in lessons for their talented children. Far from being typical stage parents, the Austerlitzes were intelligent, well-educated, and cultured. Astaire family friend Larry Billman notes in *Fred Astaire: A Bio-Bibliography* that the father's "constant support, careful and vigorous career planning and never-ending, unobtrusive love are substantial portions of the foundation from which Fred and Adele Astaire would rise." Johanna moved the children to New York City, where she tutored them daily, and Adele and Fred quickly rose to prominence in vaudeville, eventually reaching great success on Broadway and the London stage.

This pattern of hard work, devotion to family, and perseverance is a constant theme in Astaire's life and stands in strong contrast to his breezy public persona. As Billman observes, "Whether through intuition or tutoring" by Johanna, Astaire thought "of his work as 'Work' rather than some charismatic 'Art' he created magically."

Vaudeville was a hard grind, and the audiences not easily pleased—particularly since Astaire was not beautiful, especially in his youth. He was shorter than his sister, slightly built, and equipped with a thin, rather reedy voice. Unlike free-spirited Adele, Astaire resisted most social temptations and "began to retreat inside himself, creating the work ethic with which he would strive toward perfection." He selected the songs and designed the dances, and vaudeville's grueling schedule spurred him to reshape and refine the act and exercise his inventiveness. In vaudeville Astaire also developed his lifelong affection for and study of black dancers, especially Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, with whom he danced in Texas during 1914. When Adele retired, in 1932, Fred carried on without losing a beat.

Thanks to all this hard work at making his art look easy, Astaire was a huge star before he appeared in his first film, *Dancing Lady*, in 1933. The famous report on his first screen test, written by RKO studio official Burt Grady, underscores the dancer's lack of obvious personal appeal: "Can't act. Can't sing. Slightly bald. Can dance a little." Fortunately, studio head David Selznick saw Astaire's potential and hired him, eventually giving him total creative control over the musical sequences of his films, an unprecedented arrangement.

Working in seclusion with only a pianist and the choreographer Hermes Pan, Astaire typically designed and then filmed the dance scenes before the rest of the film was shot. Croce notes that Astaire "forced camerawork, cutting, synchronization, and scoring to ever higher standards of sensitivity and precision. He fought on every front, and in the cutting room he was a terror." He demanded perfection, putting himself and Ginger Rogers through one hundred hours of rehearsal for the sequence of roller-skating to "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." He insisted on forty-seven takes of "Never Gonna Dance" while dawn approached and Rogers's feet bled through her shoes. He was as relentlessly inventive as in his vaudeville days, incorporating moves from jazz, tap, and even ballet, adding immensely to the movies' dance repertoire.

The hard work paid off. Astaire revolutionized how Hollywood filmed dance and in the process radically advanced the art of movie musicals. Because of the rather primitive ability to integrate sound in the early 1930s, dance sequences tended to be merely photographed stage scenes or elaborate spectacles broken up into numerous shots to make things easier for the editors. In the technique pioneered by Busby Berkeley, the dancers would take a few steps, then there would be a cut to a reaction shot of a bystander, then a few more steps, a shot of the ingenue's ecstatic face, and so on. Astaire opted for a simpler approach that kept the characters at the forefront, insisting that he and his partner be presented full figure in extended takes with elaborate camera movements (to follow the characters better) but no cuts, tricks, or complicated edits.

He also introduced the practice of integrating the movies' musical numbers into their stories, using them to advance the action and comment on the character relationships. The dances of Astaire and his partners always aimed at revealing undercurrents of passion. Unlike many Hollywood leading men, Astaire was no Lothario: He and Rogers didn't kiss until *Carefree*, their eighth film together, and even then only in a dream sequence. He was equally chaste with his other leading ladies, and his screen romances replaced the typical singing and dancing romantic leads—Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald—with spicier, wittier, and more realistically rocky relationships.

Astaire's characters and story lines were directed as well toward making the sublime look easy. Although the costumes, sets, and settings of his films, especially the early ones, often had a sophisticated, European flavor (sometimes treated rather puckishly as in *A Damsel in Distress*), Astaire's persona is very American: ambitious, hard-working, and persistent. His characters have solidly American names like Lucky Garnett, "Bake" Baker, Huckleberry Haines, Guy, Danny, Josh, Johnny, and Jed. He takes on solidly American jobs: businessman, photographer, soldier, sailor, small-time entertainer, con man. In pursuit of romance, especially with Ginger Rogers, Astaire played the distinctly American role of salesman, perpetually making new pitches until he wears down the customer's resistance.

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Fred & Ginger in Swing Time

The image of Astaire as the suave sophisticate chasing rich women, playing golf, drinking martinis in Art Deco nightclubs, or betting on horses is actually uncommon among his screen roles. In fact, his 1937 portrayal of ballet dancer Petrov in *Shall We Dance?* caused a significant drop in box-office receipts although the film was quite good. Thus, at the beginning of *Swing Time*, we see Fred playing dice with his dubious partners in a scruffy music and dance act, and after his losses, he hasn't a penny in the world. In *The Sky's the Limit*, he's a World War II fighter pilot on leave pursuing Joan Leslie—with whom he has a debate about the importance of work in a man's life, with Fred (posing as an easy-going drifter) ironically taking the playboy's side of the argument. In *Follow the Fleet*, he's a sailor on leave chasing Ginger Rogers, and in *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*, he and Ginger work their way up from penury in Paris to huge popular success in America.

Astaire wasn't often poor in his films, of course, but he is almost always shown as having earned any money he has. And he was remarkably humble about his achievements, both in his films and in his life. In *The Band Wagon*, playing Tony Hunter (a character clearly based on Astaire himself), he says, "I am not Nijinsky. I am not Marlon Brando. I am Mrs. Hunter's little boy, Tony, song-and-dance man." *The Band Wagon*, probably his best film, explicitly considers the nature of artistry and finds that behind all great or even good art is a lot of sweat and hard work. Drawing on the culture of his childhood, Astaire established self-control and persistence as the sources of both his and his characters' success. In fact, a common motif in his films is another character's lack of self-control—especially Miss Rogers' inability to govern her emotions—causing trouble for Fred. *The Band Wagon* includes a self-referentially comic sequence in which Astaire's Tony, goaded by pompous theater director Jack Buchanan to play an angry-young-man type berating Cyd Charisse for her idealism, clumsily attempts to overcome his character's powerful self-control. In *Funny Face*, he punctures Audrey Hepburn's devotion to a parody of the French existentialists: "Even philosophers want to be kissed."

The extraordinary persistence and self-control that bring his characters success in both work and romance, and never without a lot of perspiration over both, is the under-appreciated aspect of Astaire's achievement. Ernst Lubitsch and other directors of the time had all the froth and elegance of Astaire's films, if not more, but their musicals are largely forgotten because they lacked the other side of Astaire. Warner Brothers' Dick Powell and Busby Berkeley musicals stressed the hard work but missed the elegance. And the highly popular Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald operettas were artistic and passionate but lacked Astaire's controlling vision and often descended into sentimentality.

Gene Kelly, a powerful, athletic dancer, likewise could not connect with audiences as firmly as Astaire. Kelly liked to play earthy characters in proletarian settings, but his energetic, muscular, and above all clearly arduous dance sequences made dance seem a thing for professionals rather than the masses. And by the 1950s—with choreographers like Bob Fosse and astonishing sequences like *The Pajama Game*'s "Steam Heat"—movie dance grew further and further separated from anything that an average person might be able to do. Striving toward a standard of perfection is something everybody can do, but expressing oneself through dance is a daunting notion, and Astaire's aristocratic grace and ease proved much more deeply democratic in their effect than Kelly's determined efforts to create dances for the masses. It's hard to imagine a chain of dance-instruction studios named after Gene Kelly or Bob Fosse, but Astaire's chain of studios were profitable for many years.

Fred Astaire's delicate balance between passion and self-control is what creates his cool elegance and makes his films still interesting after sixty years. We can see the hard work and self-discipline that go into one of his song-and-dance numbers. We can watch him pursue his leading lady through a comically elaborate maze of misunderstandings, mistaken identities, and missed connections. We can even marvel at his unsurpassed physical control in his wonderful dance numbers. But we also know it's going to work out in the end—easily, gracefully, and charmingly—because he is, after all, Fred Astaire, as lightfooted and lighthearted as anyone could be. As *anyone* could be. ♦

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TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

With Peace in Balkans, Milosevic Steps Down to Launch Web IPO

By PETER KANN
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic resigned today and announced that he was founding an Internet company, Slobo.com, which will market pan-Slavic tchotchkes.

Inspired by one of Microsoft's "Where do you want to go today?" commercials, Milosevic renounced power politics and ethnic cleansing as "totally old-paradigm" and immediately set off for Los Altos in search of venture capital. Milosevic has prepared a business plan, built largely around marketing Bobbin' Head Serb Dolls online.

Milosevic's move is the latest in a series of celebrity Web startups. The trend started with efforts by Dr. C. Everett Koop and former CNN financial anchor Lou Dobbs and then reached tsunami force when Warren Buffett announced he was leaving Berkshire Hathaway to launch a Web IPO because, "I want to make some real money." Buffett's site, Mogulcam.com, shows live 24-hours-a-day videocam images from the bedrooms of various billionaires, including George Soros, Bill Gates, and Buffett himself. An affiliated site, Greenspancam.com, has become a favorite of Fed watchers.

Milosevic joins an already crowded field of politicians turned Web entrepreneurs. Last month, the entire Republican presidential field dropped out of the race to pursue Internet opportunities, with mixed results.

Former vice president Dan Quayle's effort, Quayle.kom, failed as a result of technical difficulties. Lamar Alexander's Web company, Lamar!com, has elicited much curious interest. Nobody can figure out why Alexander is launching the site. Nonetheless, he has vowed to spend the next six years traveling to all 50 states marketing it. "Content is dead," is all Mr. Alexander would say by way of explanation. Steve Forbes's site has yet to get off the ground, though he has hired the entire IBM workforce to organize it.

The Milosevic resignation, though, scrambles Balkan politics, and leaves NATO diplomats struggling to understand

Please Turn to WEBTYRANT, *Page B6*

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ONCE IN A BLUE MOON PEOPLE DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

BEHOLD THE WONDERS OF TECHNOLOGY. SPECTACULAR BREAKTHROUGHS THAT LEAD TO HISTORIC MILESTONES. AND STEADY ADVANCEMENTS THAT QUIETLY TRANSFORM HUMAN LIVES. SPACE TECHNOLOGY DOES BOTH: LAUNCHING EPIC EVENTS SUCH AS THE FIRST LUNAR LANDING AND GENERATING THOUSANDS OF INNOVATIONS THAT EMPOWER THE PEOPLE OF EARTH. GPS UNITS TO DIRECT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS. CONTROLS TO GUIDE MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIRS. MRI. PET AND CAT SCANS TO DETECT ELUSIVE DISEASES. SATELLITE IMAGERY TO MONITOR DANGEROUS STORMS AND KEEP THE PEACE. CELL PHONES AND COMMUNICATION SATELLITES TO EXTEND OUR REACH WORLDWIDE—AND A HOST OF OTHER TOOLS AND PROCESSES THAT PRESERVE AND ENRICH OUR LIVES. SPACE TECHNOLOGY—IT GAVE US THE MOON AND CONTINUES TO GIVE MORE THAN WE EVER IMAGINED. EVERY DAY.

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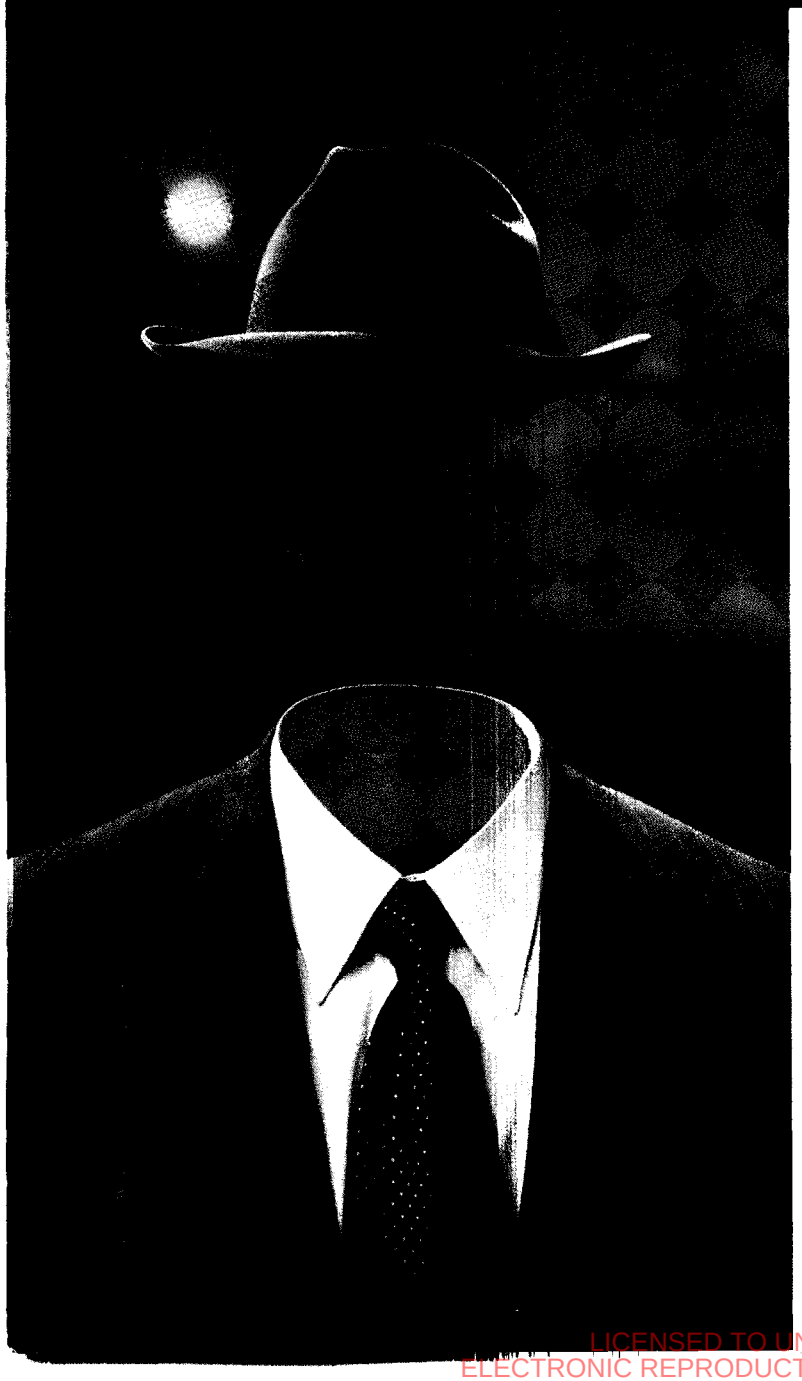
THE MYSTERY OF THE INVISIBLE BROKER.

{A cautionary tale}



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